

Huskers Illustrated

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High Hurdle

Hungry Buffaloes offer next big challenge to 11-0 Huskers



Brian Hill

THIS IS THE WAY it was supposed to be when the Big 12 was created, and Colorado replaced Oklahoma as the final opponent on Nebraska's schedule in 1996.

But not since that first year of the new conference have both teams entered this game with a shot at the Big 12 Championship game a week later.

In 1996, Nebraska and Colorado entered their day after Thanksgiving showdown with identical 9-1 records, and both were 7-0 in conference play. The fourth-ranked Huskers held off the No. 5 Buffaloes 17-12 to make it to the inaugural title game.

Since then, Colorado has not put itself in position to represent the North Division on the first Saturday in December by beating Nebraska. But the Buffs have certainly come close to knocking off the favored Huskers every year since, including 1997, when Nebraska went on to a national championship.

That year, No. 2 Nebraska edged Colorado 27-24 in Boulder. In 1998, No. 14 Nebraska squeezed by 16-14 in Lincoln. In 1999, No. 3 Nebraska needed overtime to defeat Colorado 33-30 in Boulder.

Last November, the Huskers needed Chris Brown's 29-yard field goal as time expired to win 34-32 in Lincoln.

The Buffaloes may not be back to their lofty status of 1996, but they are back in the top 25 with an 8-2 (6-1 Big 12) record and enter the Nov. 23 showdown

with a chance to represent the North in the title game if they knock off the Huskers. So the Buffaloes won't just be playing the spoiler role for a change.

Kansas State, which has represented the North in the championship game the two times Nebraska hasn't (1998 and 2000) tried to take on that spoiler role this time.

The Wildcats, who had righted their ship after a four-game losing streak, led 14-13 at halftime and had visions of pulling off the upset. But a classic drive to start the second half led to 18 straight points. It wasn't pretty, but the Huskers found a way to win for the 11th time and moved one step closer to their goal of the Jan. 3 national championship game at the Rose Bowl.

"All in all, it was the kind of game we expected, and we feel pretty good about the way our players have responded now for 11 games in a row," Nebraska Coach Frank Solich said.

You can read about the 7-minute, 19-second drive that helped the Huskers gain control and much more about the win over Kansas State in this edition of

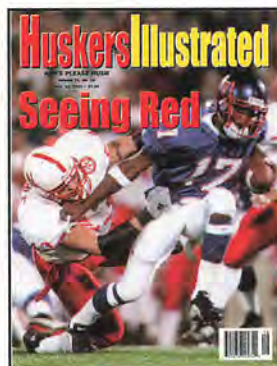
Huskers Illustrated.

Contributing editor Mike Babcock has a closer look at Nebraska's talented tandem of I-backs — Dahrran Diedrick and Thunder Collins.

Diedrick, a junior, and senior Eric Crouch each rushed for more than 100 yards, and several teammates produced big plays to help make sure Senior Day wasn't spoiled for the emotional group who were making their final appearance before a raucous crowd of 77,818 at Memorial Stadium.

As the 23 seniors were introduced in pregame ceremonies, captain Keyuo Craver put his feelings into words, running onto the field with a sign that read, "I'M GONNA MISS U GUYS."

I'm sure the feeling is mutual. ■



ON THE COVER

DeJuan Groce (right) leaps into the arms of teammate Ira Cooper as they celebrate Groce's 60-yard punt return for a touchdown. Also pictured is Jerrell Pippens. Photo by Scott Bruhn

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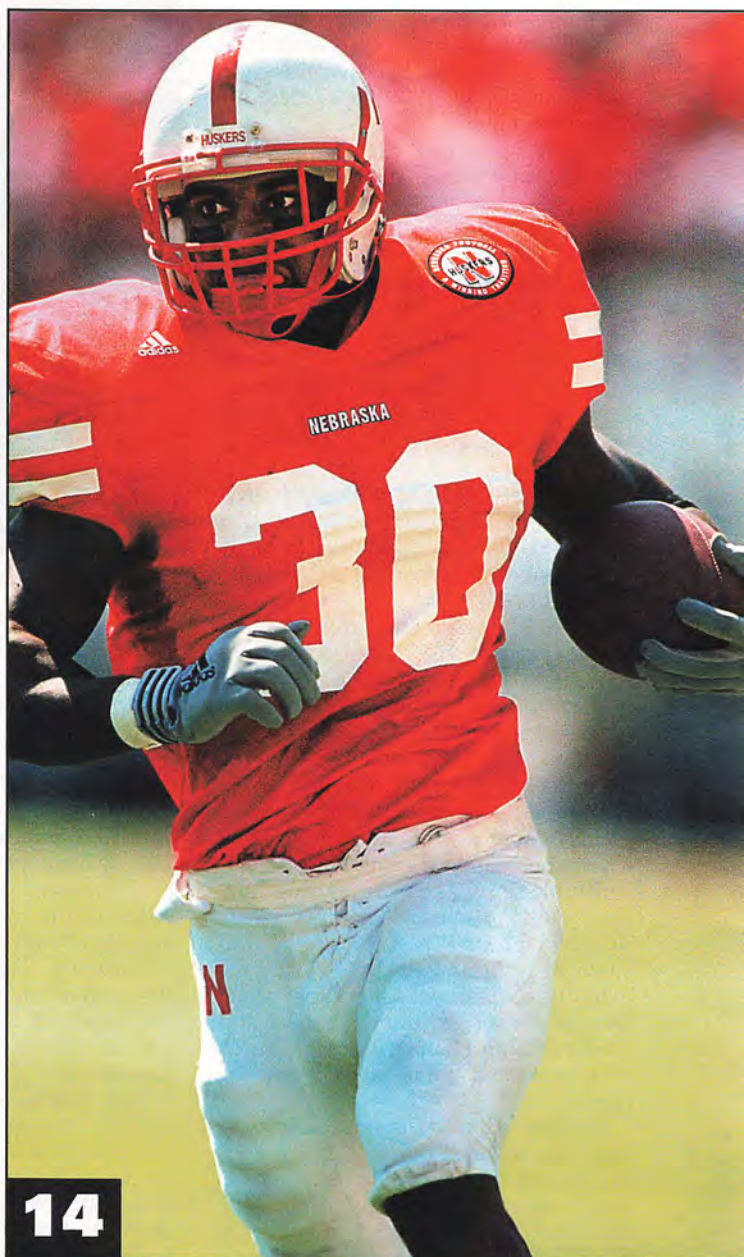
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Josh Brown has had his ups and downs since his game-winning field goal vs. Colorado. *By Mike Babcock*



14 Talented Tandem

Coach Frank Solich says his top two I-backs — Dahrran Diedrick and Thunder Collins — complement each other very well. *By Mike Babcock*

NEXT ISSUE

The review of the Colorado game will be mailed Nov. 26.

'Young, Growing'

Nebraska men's basketball Coach Barry Collier remained optimistic, finding some positives in his team's 58-55 exhibition victory against Nebraska-Kearney.

"I thought we had a chance to really fold when we struggled to score, but we did not," he said after watching the NCAA Division II Antelopes take his team to the wire.

"I liked the fact we had a lot of young guys in there and they competed hard."

After hitting 53.6 percent from the field in the first half, Nebraska went the first 8:43 of the second half without scoring, to allow Nebraska-Kearney to make up a 10-point halftime deficit.

Young players will have to play key roles for Collier's second Cornhusker team. Senior guard Cary Cochran is the only returning player with significant experience.

Cochran was third nationally in 3-point shooting percentage last season and needs only 24 3-pointers to break the school career record of 202, held by Eric Piatkowski.

Cochran was 3-for-5 from 3-point range and scored 11 points in the exhibition.

The bulk of the offense came from newcomers Jake Muhleisen and Brennon Clemmons, however. Muhleisen is a freshman from Lincoln. Clemmons is a junior college transfer.

Muhleisen scored 12 points, while Clemmons scored a game-high 19.

Muhleisen was in the starting lineup, with Cochran, seniors Ross Buckendahl and Kedrick Ford, and sophomore Brian Conklin. Prior to the exhibition, Collier said those five, along with senior John Robinson and freshmen Dan Heimos and John Turek had separated themselves from the others.

But the situation is fluid, changing from day to day, Collier said.

The only certainty at this point is that freshman walk-ons Tony Wilbrand, Garth Glissman and Bronsen Schliep will redshirt, joining Andrew Drevo, a transfer from Morningside College.

The redshirt decision had to be made before the exhibition.

What the team will look like as far as starters and rotations won't be immediately apparent, according to Collier. "Certainly, I think that into the non-conference schedule in any season, you need about six or eight games



Second-year Coach Barry Collier found some positives in his team's performance.

before you really know what your team can do, where you need to look for good defensive play in transition, leadership, scoring and rebounding, and so forth," he said.

Collier can look to Clemmons for defense. The 6-foot-2 guard from Indianapolis by way of Olney, Ill., Central Community College, made four steals in just 14 minutes of play.

Clemmons' steals were a key to avoiding the upset. "Brennon is very capable of playing excellent defense," said Collier. "That's where his strength lies, on the defensive end."

Clemmons admitted he was nervous in his first appearance as a Cornhusker.

"But you've just got to get out there and play," he said. "It felt good."

He acknowledged that defense was his strength, "his best thing," and he took pride in that. "Defense wins games, so I'm going to do what I can on defense to help us win," he said.

His offense, much of it coming on drives to the basket, also helped. Collier told him if he saw an opening to the basket, he should attack. And "that's what I did," he said.

He was 6-for-10 from the field and 7-for-12 from the free throw line.

Cochran, like Collier, remained upbeat following the scare at home, before a crowd of 6,562. "We basically

knew it was going to be a dogfight," he said. "We're young, we're growing."

Collier was encouraged by how quickly the young players were picking up his system during practice before the first of two exhibition games. The Cornhuskers were scheduled to play the Delta Jammers at the Devaney Sports Center on the Tuesday after the Kansas State football game.

They open the season at home against North Carolina A&T on Nov. 20.

Collier said his second team has a better understanding of his system than the first did. "I definitely believe so. We've introduced a lot more, almost twice as much as we did a year ago (at this point). These guys have been able to absorb it and execute it in subsequent days. I'm encouraged by how much they're able to pick up and recognize. Now we need to see if we can do it under game conditions."

They did, and they didn't, against Nebraska-Kearney, which came as no surprise.

"There will be some ups and downs, especially with our young guys trying to get their feet," Collier said. "But it's also an exciting part of it because the attitudes have been very good . . . the more we can get into game situations, the more we can find out how much we're actually executing." ■

OFFENSE, DEFINITELY

Cornhusker quarterback Eric Crouch could be headed for a professional football career on offense, even though he has the ability to make the switch to defensive back (as Scott Frost did), according to Mel Kiper Jr., NFL draft analyst for the ESPN cable television network.

"I want this kind of player on offense, responsible for making plays that change the scoreboard," Kiper wrote of Crouch in a recent on-line column for ESPN.com.

Kiper wrote that he projected Crouch as a receiver or running back.

Gil Brandt, an analyst for NFL.com, told the Lincoln Journal Star that an NFL team might draft Crouch as a quarterback and then be allowed to "prove or disprove to people that he can do the job." In any case, "I don't think there's any question he'll be drafted," said Brandt.

Brandt said Crouch is a better athlete and probably a better passer than Frost.

GOLDEN ARM FINALIST

Crouch is among five finalists for the 2001 Johnny Unitas Award, to be presented on Nov. 27 in Louisville, Ky. The award is presented to nation's top senior collegiate quarterback.

The other finalists are David Carr of Fresno State, Joey Harrington of Oregon, Zak Kustok of Northwestern and Kurt Kittner of Illinois. "It's a great honor to be nominated for such an award," said Cornhusker Coach Frank Solich, who compared Crouch's toughness to that of Unitas.

Tommie Frazier won the award in 1995. Scott Frost was a finalist in 1997.

Crouch also has been named to the Walter Camp and Davey O'Brien watch lists.

"There's no one who does all the things that Eric does, and does as well. He's the top quarterback, the top player and the top athlete in the country," said Solich. "There's no question in our minds."

THORPE AWARD FINALIST

Senior cornerback Keyuo Craver is among 12 semifinalists for the 2001 Jim Thorpe Award, presented annually to the nation's top collegiate defensive back by the Thorpe Award Association of Oklahoma City. Three finalists will be announced on Nov. 20, with the winner announced Dec. 6.

Craver is "playing excellent football," Coach Frank Solich said.

Opponents had been trying to avoid Craver, he said, but with junior cornerback DeJuan Groce "playing so well, they started mixing it up and he (Craver) responded." ■



Keyuo Craver

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The Nebraska men's basketball team was picked to finish 11th in the Big 12 in a preseason poll of conference-area media representatives. Cornhusker Coach Barry Collier dismisses such polls.

"As I told our team, this is probably one of the few times I'm in agreement with the environmentalists," he said. "I think that's a large waste of paper and ink, those pre-season predictions."

"So we take that all with a grain of salt."

The conference coaches picked Nebraska to finish 12th. Collier can use some predictions to motivate his players. "To a certain extent, there's a desire to show up the so-called experts," he said.

IT'S ACADEMIC

Senior tight end Tracey Wistrom has earned an \$18,000 post-graduate scholarship from the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame. Wistrom is among 16 recipients of the scholarship, one of whom will also receive the Vincent dePaul Draddy Trophy.

The Draddy Trophy winner will be announced at an awards dinner in New York City on Dec. 11. A \$25,000 post-graduate scholarship accompanies the Draddy Trophy.

To be eligible, a student-athlete must be a senior or graduate student in the final season of collegiate eligibility, with a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or better.

Senior offensive tackle Dave Volk received a \$5,000 post-graduate scholarship, also from the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame.



Tracey Wistrom

MEN'S BASKETBALL CAPTAINS

Seniors Ross Buckendahl and Kedrick Ford have been chosen as captains for the Nebraska men's basketball team. Buckendahl, a walk-on from Battle Creek, Neb., sat out last season because of a knee injury. Ford played in only 13 games, averaging 1.1 points and 0.3 rebounds.

Ford is a 6-foot-2 guard from Macon, Ga., who transferred from Neosho County, Kan., Community College. Buckendahl is a 6-5 forward, with one career start.

BRIEFLY NOTED

— The ESPN Classic cable television network will present a retrospective on the 1971 Nebraska-Oklahoma "Game of the Century" on Nov. 25, the 30th anniversary of the game.

More than 60 players and coaches were interviewed for the retrospective.

— Nebraska receivers coach Ron Brown told the Lincoln Journal Star that quarterback Eric Crouch would have been an "All-American-type receiver" had he opted to play that position.

Brown's assessment was based on Crouch's "tenacity" and "excellent hands."

— Kansas wide receiver Roger Ross predicts greatness for Cornhusker freshman I-back Cory Ross, who is sitting out the season as a redshirt. Roger told the Lawrence, Kan., Journal World, "he'll be the next Barry Sanders, I promise you." Roger, of course, is Cory's older brother.

— Three former Cornhusker basketball players were on opening-day NBA rosters: Tyrone Lue, Washington Wizards; Eric Piatkowski, Los Angeles Clippers; Mikki Moore, Detroit Pistons. In addition, Erick Strickland was subsequently signed by the Boston Celtics.

— Former Cornhusker baseball player Jamal Strong was named the Seattle Mariners' "Minor League Player of the Year" after hitting .326 and stealing an organization-high 82 bases for the Mariners' Class A teams in Wisconsin and San Bernardino, Calif. Strong is an outfielder.

— Janice Bright, a 5-foot-9 high school guard from Los Angeles, has made an oral commitment to accept a scholarship from Nebraska. Such commitments are not binding, however.

— Zach Kroenke, a left-handed pitcher at Omaha Northwest High School, has given the Nebraska baseball team an oral commitment. The Cornhuskers also have oral commitments from Rob Morrissey of Omaha's Millard West High and Alex Gordon of Lincoln Southeast High. ■

Spreading The Word

The media still plays a huge role in the Heisman Trophy selection process



Mike BABCOCK

DON BRYANT, Nebraska's sports information director, was in Denver advancing the game as Coach Bob Devaney's Cornhuskers prepared to play Colorado in early November of 1972. Snow fell, and as he remembers it, the snow buried his rental car in the motel parking lot.

Dan Jenkins, the well-known writer for Sports Illustrated, contacted Bryant to say he planned to attend the game and if Johnny Rodgers played well, write about Rodgers.

"Give me a packet (on Rodgers) when I get there," Jenkins said.

Bryant called back to Lincoln and had Tom Simons, his assistant, make copies of newspaper stories written about Rodgers. Jenkins got the packet. Rodgers had a big day against Colorado. And the next week's edition of Sports Illustrated included a story, with photos, about the senior wingback.

The headline was: "Try to catch a bolt of lightning." And the story concluded with Jenkins' assertion that his Heisman Trophy vote would go to Rodgers, "the best football player in the country."

Because of that story, not long before Heisman votes were tabulated, "I've always given him (Jenkins) credit for putting Johnny over the top," said Bryant.

Rodgers was the first of Nebraska's two Heisman Trophy winners, of course. Mike Rozier was the second, in 1983. And Bryant's office handled the publicity for both.

Sports information directors' responsibilities have changed. They no longer advance games or tote canisters of 16-millimeter film to distribute to television stations. They don't spend Sundays up-dating statistics by hand, typing them onto ditto masters, running off copies and then stuffing the copies in envelopes. With computers, the dissemination of information is instantaneous.

Even so, the Heisman Trophy selection process is the same in many ways now as it was when Rodgers and Rozier won the award. The media still plays "a huge role," Bryant said.

The majority of the nearly 1,000 voters are media representatives, of course — former Heisman Trophy winners also vote. But media involvement goes far beyond the voting.

The key media outlet is television. It is essential, according to Bryant. Heisman candidates must have "outstanding performances on national television," he said. "They have to perform, do dramatic, spectacular things, get a lot of yards. They've got to do that. But people have to see it."

Bryant discussed his Heisman Trophy experiences the week after Nebraska's 20-10 victory against Oklahoma, which provided Cornhusker quarterback Eric Crouch with national television exposure on ABC, as well as mention in several influential national publications.

"I would assume Eric got help with all those guys seeing

him," said Bryant.

Sports Illustrated devoted five pages to the game, with a story by Austin Murphy, color photographs and the assertion that though Crouch hasn't won a national title, he "might be the best quarterback Nebraska ever had." Such coverage is invaluable to his Heisman candidacy.

Crouch's statistics weren't out of the ordinary. But he was involved in a dramatic play, catching a reverse pass from freshman Mike Stuntz and scoring a touchdown. He broke a 19-yard run to set up the Stuntz pass. And statistics or not, he had a significant impact on a big game.

Rozier's statistics in 1983 were compelling. He led the nation in rushing, with 2,148 yards, averaging an NCAA record 7.81 yards per carry — the record still stands. And he was only the second Division I-A back ever to rush for more than 2,000 yards in a season. Marcus Allen was the first.

Plus, Rozier performed well in nationally televised games, rushing for 159 yards and two touchdowns (one on a 60-yard run) against Missouri and rushing for 205 yards and one touchdown at Oklahoma. He also rushed for 285 yards and four touchdowns in a regionally televised game against Kansas.

Writers for national publications discuss players and such performances with each other.

"There's no question about it; there's a network," Bryant said. "The guys who watch a player, whether it's here or anywhere else, talk to other writers, other (Heisman) voters all season long. They say, 'Boy, the guy I saw at Texas, the guy I saw at Nebraska, he's something.'"

"That plants the seed. There isn't any one thing, but there are certain things that if you don't get them, you're not going to win it, being on television, national exposure in Sports Illustrated or big-time (newspaper) articles. I don't think anybody can get it without appearing on television."

"They plug it on the game. 'He's a Heisman candidate.' People remember that."

The ESPN cable network has changed the dynamics of national television exposure, providing highlights that can focus attention on a particular player and enhance his Heisman chances. But "you can't create one with TV or media or sports information or anything like that," said Bryant.

The bottom line is, a Heisman Trophy winner has to perform, as Rodgers did at Colorado in 1972. He ran for a touchdown, caught a touchdown pass and finished with 266 all-purpose yards, most of them on punt returns — including a 59-yarder that was nullified by a clipping penalty.

The game was nationally televised, as well as filtered through Jenkins' words.

"Johnny dazzled them, and Dan came in and said, 'He's the guy,'" Bryant said.

First and foremost, Rodgers had to dazzle them. But Jenkins' words certainly helped. ■



Eric Crouch's play in the Oklahoma game received plenty of exposure.



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Being Himself

Husker defensive coordinator Bohl is having his most enjoyable season



Terry DOUGLASS

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN last year's struggles and this season's dominating performance by the Nebraska defense, second-year defensive coordinator Craig Bohl started feeling — and acting — like his old self again.

The transformation was so gradual that nobody can quite put their finger on when it happened. However, Bohl and his players agree that there's been a major change.

"He's a lot more relaxed," rush end Chris Kelsay said. "He's kind of molding into a defensive coordinator more so than ever before. It's just like going out on the field and getting game experience. It's something that he kind of needed to get accustomed to and get more experience with.

"He's turned into a great defensive coordinator and a great coach to play under. I think that anybody on the defensive side of the ball would tell you that he's fun to play for."

That wasn't always the case last season. Serving in his first year as defensive coordinator and following in the footsteps of Charlie McBride sometimes made Bohl appear uptight.

"Last year, if something happened in a game, he would get a little flustered," middle linebacker Jamie Burrow said.

Bohl admits he was struggling at times with his new position. Even though he served for five years as linebackers coach under McBride, moving into a position where he had to call the shots on defense was a big jump.

Bohl's demeanor wasn't helped by Nebraska's performance on the field. One year after the Huskers had fielded one of their best defenses ever in 1999, Bohl's first edition of the Blackshirts allowed an average of 19.4 points per game, which was the school's worst scoring defense mark since 1958. The average of 322 yards of total offense gained against the Huskers in 2000 was their worst since 1991.

"Last year was a difficult year for me personally," Bohl said.

After doing some offseason soul searching, Bohl eventually came to the realization that he simply needed to be himself and have confidence that he could get the job done. Bohl said it wasn't that he was trying to imitate McBride, but he wasn't always being true to his nature, either.

That's all changed this season. Despite the defense being considered a question mark in many preseason publications, Bohl retained a quiet confidence that was copied by his players. The Huskers overcame the lack of big-name stars with eight defensive returning starters who were committed to teamwork. Bohl's defense has also benefited from younger players developing into major contributors.

The result has been a defense that ranks in the top 10 nationally in nearly every major category. No doubt, it's been quite a turnaround.

"It's probably been as enjoyable a year for me coaching-

wise as what I've had in 17 years of major college coaching," Bohl said. "And so it's a very special year, and I think maybe it's surprised some people. But thus far, it's been really enjoyable. I can't see any reason why it's not going to continue to be an enjoyable year of coaching."

Bohl said it's not only fun because the defense is playing well but because he's totally enjoying the relationships he's built with his players.

"The thing that I guess I found most gratifying is just to begin to be myself and for the players to be able to relate to me and our coaching staff," Bohl said. "I think that there's a real comfort level and confidence when our coaches look them in the eye and we're asking them to do certain things.

They know exactly where we're at, and that's been very, very gratifying."

Coach Frank Solich said he could see Bohl start to enter more of a comfort zone prior to the start of the season. For Solich, it's a case of been there, done that, as he replaced Hall of Fame coach Tom Osborne after the 1997 season.

"Craig's quite a bit more comfortable, and that will continue to be the case," Solich said. "I can say that because that's how I felt.

"There's no question now that he's coaching within his personality. That's not always easy to do, but your players know it, and sometimes they'll kind of wait to see how you respond."

Burrow said he first noticed Bohl's transformation in a game earlier this season when he forgot to cover a receiver coming out of the backfield. After the play, one in which both Burrow and Bohl knew an assignment had been blown, Burrow said Bohl looked like he was getting ready to explode in anger. But instead, Bohl told his fifth-year senior, "it's no big deal."

"I was just shocked that he did that," Burrow said. "I was like, 'what is that all about?' but I think he understands that when we're out there on the field and we do make a mistake that we do take it personally, and it's something that we're not happy about. We don't really need coaches jumping all over us about it."

That doesn't mean Bohl won't get in a player's face.

"He's not afraid to get on you," Kelsay said. "But at the same time, if you do something good, he'll be the first one to come up and congratulate you, too.

"He's really matured as a defensive coordinator, and he's really allowed us to mature as players under him."

Burrow agreed.

"I would definitely say that he's more confident in his ability to call a defensive game," Burrow said. "He's not forcing things on his players where maybe last year he just tried a little too hard. He's more laid back and has a better personal relationship with each player on defense. Whenever you get a coach like that, who really gets his players to enjoy playing for him, you're going to have a good defense." ■



Craig Bohl is in his second year as defensive coordinator.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the Grand Island Independent. He can be reached at tdbbdouglass@netzero.net.

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Colorado Classics

Neither side needs to be reminded that this is a significant game



Curt McKEEVER

OH, HOW BILL MCCARTNEY loved to make the Big Red faithful's blood boil.

Remember when Colorado's master motivator/football coach used to circle the Nebraska game on the schedule?

When he prevented the color red from showing up on any of the decor in the Buffaloes' football offices?

Funny how CU has seemed to get as much, or more, mileage from this game since toning down its significance.

Yes, the Buffs' losing streak to NU is running nine games now. But six of those — including each of the past five — have been decided by five points or less.

That, my friends, is what you call a rivalry.

"My most favorite game I've ever been to at Nebraska, and I wasn't even up here yet, was the year that Kordell Stewart and Rashaan Salaam came in, and they were picked to win," Nebraska junior rush end Chris Kelsay said. "Kordell just kind of buckled at the atmosphere and our Blackshirt defense."

The year was 1994, and the No. 2 Buffaloes left on the short end of a 24-7 score against the No. 3 Huskers.

"That was a game I'll never forget. It was the first game I ever came to at Memorial Stadium," Kelsay said. "I couldn't believe the atmosphere, and after the game was over, they tore down the goal posts and all that."

Ah, but there have been many other classics since.

Remember last year's contest in Lincoln? Gary Barnett's team came limping into Memorial Stadium with a puzzling 3-7 record, and no one was giving the Buffaloes a chance to win. But with freshman quarterback Craig Ochs having the game of his promising career, CU scored with 47 seconds left to go up 32-31.

Then came the drive of Eric Crouch's career. After Colorado kicked short, Crouch completed four of five passes to march the Huskers 47 yards and leave Josh Brown to kick a game-winning 29-yard field goal as time expired.

"Normally, we don't have to come back throwing the football," Crouch said. "We normally don't have to kick a field goal in the last seconds to win the game. That just made it the game that it was,"

Thoughts of that still bring a smile to Brown's face.

"It's five seconds left — one of those moments that you dream about as a kid and that you play around with in the back yard," he said. "They're all going to be memorable, but that one really is going to stand out. That's

going to be the one I'll tell my children about, and I'll show clips to."

Both players could make a best-of-moments tape from their careers just by putting together the games that they've played in against Colorado.

Two years ago, Nebraska raced to a 24-3 lead at half-time, and was on top 27-3 going into the fourth quarter. CU answered with 24 straight points. Then, after the teams exchanged fumbles, the Buffs drove to the Huskers' 20-yard line and lined up to have Jeremy Aldrich attempt a 37-yard field goal.

"I remember I was getting ready to rush the field," said NU freshman rover Philip Bland, a Lafayette, Colo., product and son of a former Buff who was then very much a CU fan. "It would've been the first time we knocked off Nebraska in a while — and he pushed it."

Aldrich's miss forced overtime, and after he hit a field goal to put the Buffs in front, Crouch halted any plans the home fans had of celebrating with a 1-yard touchdown run.

"They probably should've won that game. They could've won that game," Kelsay said. "They had a good chance, missed a field goal, and we ended up winning. That was awesome."

Nebraska was left with a similar feeling in 1998, when the Huskers beat CU 16-14 without scoring an offensive touchdown.

Crouch also remembers how in 1997, the year he redshirted, the Huskers survived a 14-point fourth quarter by CU to win 27-24.

No wonder he feels the series with the Buffs is as good as it gets for Nebraska.

"I just think every time we get together you're getting the best from everybody on the field, and you're getting the best out of every program and the coaches," he said.

It's just the way McCartney wanted it.

The difference now is no one needs to circle the game to realize its importance.

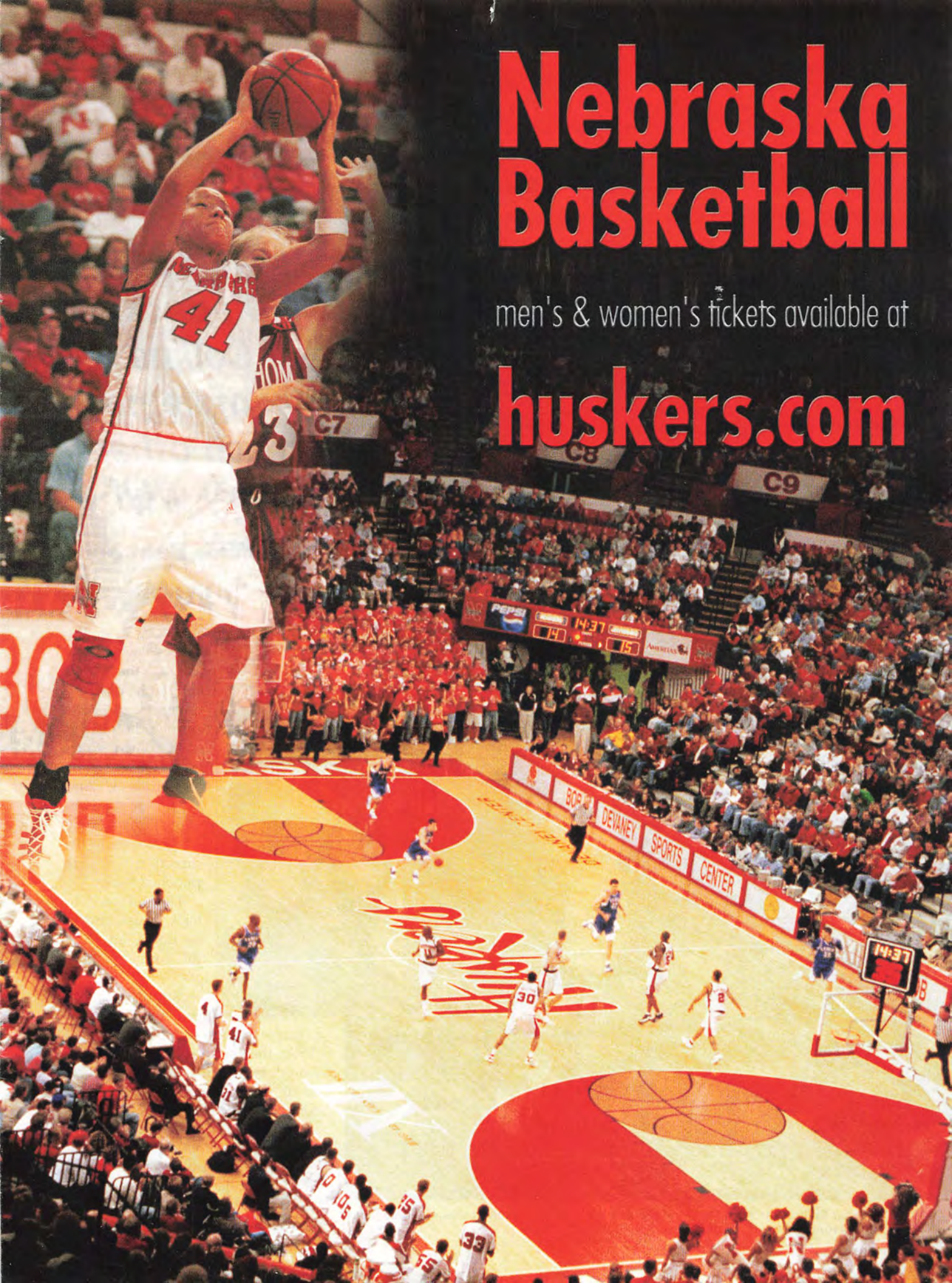
"It was even different with my dad," Bland recalled. "We'd watch the CU games, but as soon as it was the Nebraska game, my dad was almost a different person because he was so into it."

"That's how it'll be forever. They're always going to come to play us, regardless of if they're 10-0 or 0-10. It's going to be a game every single time those two teams play." ■



Nebraska freshman Philip Bland grew up a Colorado fan.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

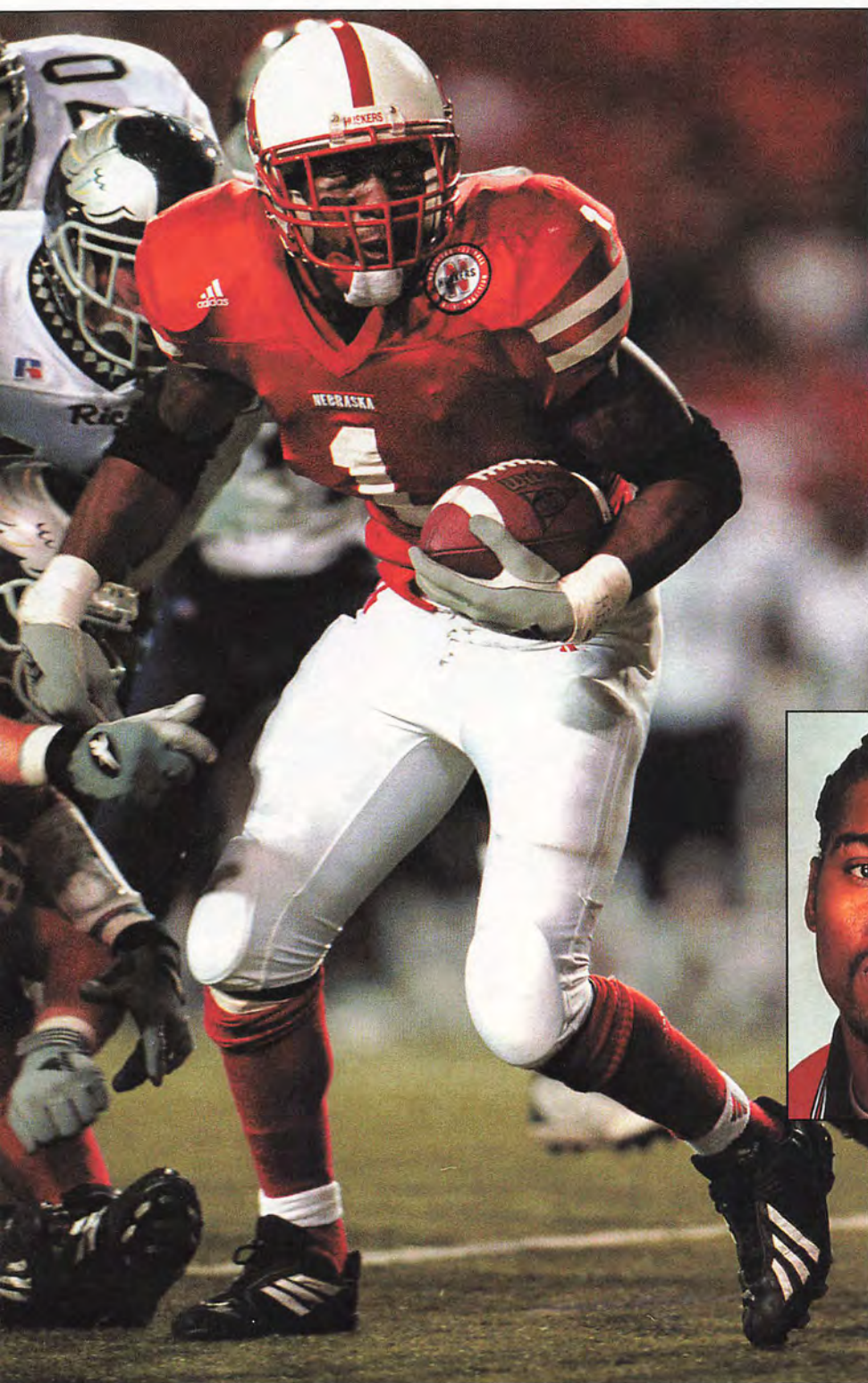


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Talented



Thunder Collins has shed the reputation he brought from junior college of being a finesse runner.

NU I-backs Diedrick, Collins 'complement each other very well'

By Mike Babcock

Dahrran Diedrick didn't make many friends among the veterans when he was on the scout team. But he did earn their respect. When someone

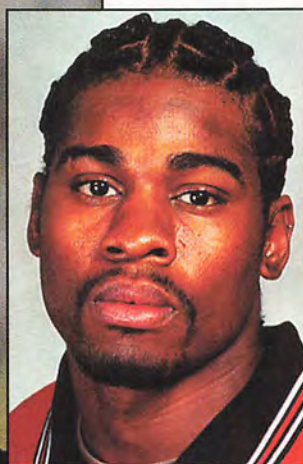
pushed, he pushed back. When someone shoved, he shoved back. And when punches were thrown, they weren't only in his direction. He punched back.

He refused to back down, and in so doing attracted the coaches' attention.

Running backs coach Dave

Gillespie smiles at the recollection. "From the very beginning here there would be stories floating around about Dahrran on the scout team, going after people, getting in fights every single day, never backing down from anybody," he said.

The junior I-back also smiles when reminded of his days on the scout squad and doesn't deny the altercations. "I got into a lot of push-



Tandem

ing and shoving, basically every day," he said.

The problem, as he remembers it, was that some of the older players — no names here — would hit him after the whistle had blown. "And that's what starts the fights," said Diedrick.

"You've just got to keep going, keep plugging away, and eventually, they'll gain respect for you and stop doing all that stuff. If you back down, they're going to lose respect for you."

He took scout-team duties seriously. He was determined to give the top-unit defense a good look, and defend himself in the process. "You have to do that or you might be stuck there," he said.

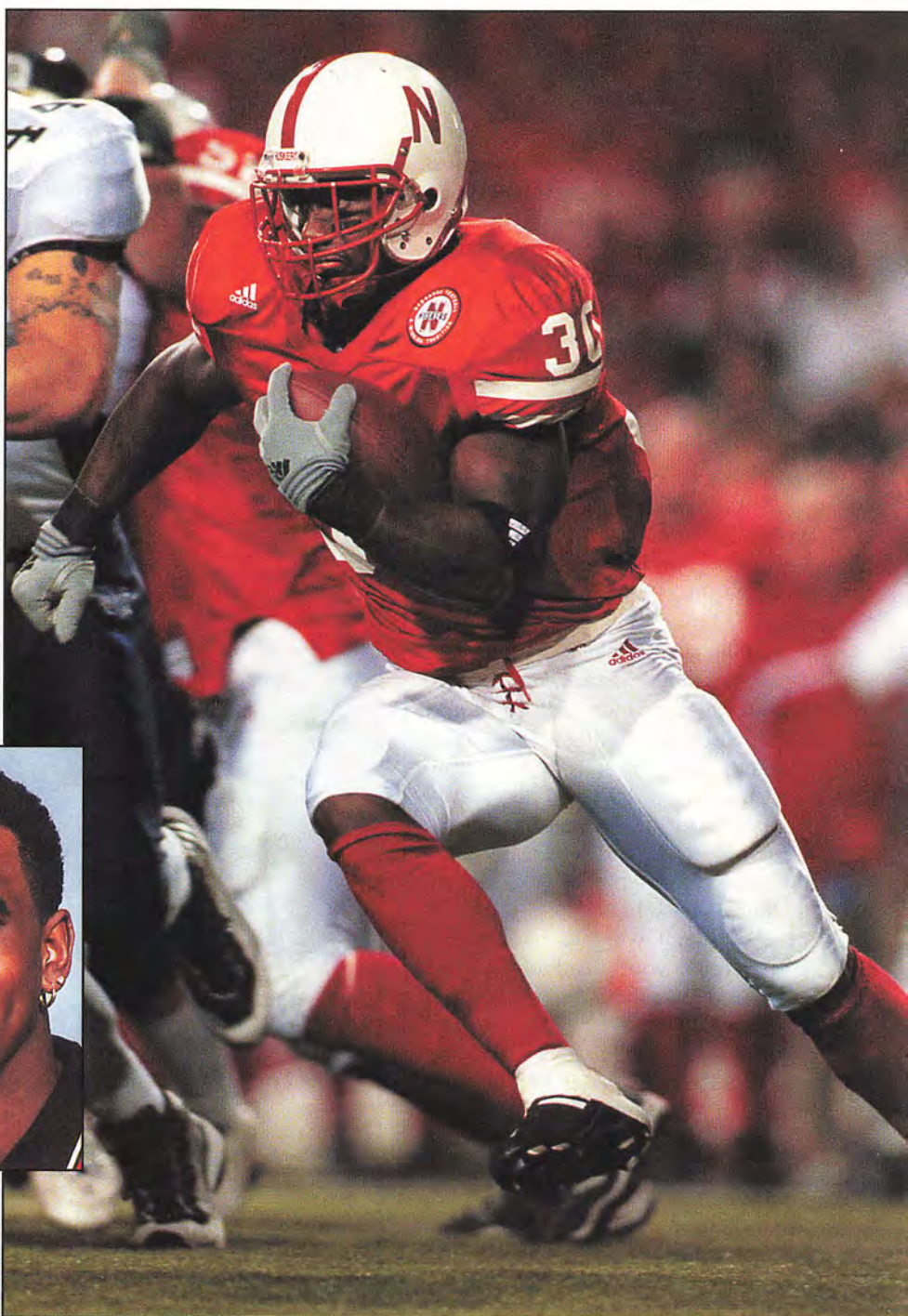
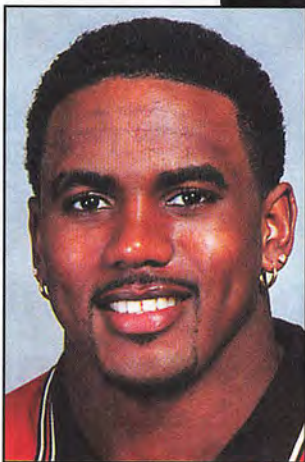
Diedrick spent only one season on the scout team before becoming a backup as a redshirted freshman. And now, after patiently waiting his turn, he's finishing his first season as the starter.

Going into the Kansas game, he was on pace to rush for more yards than any Cornhusker since 1997, when Ahman Green gained 1,877 yards — the second-highest single-season total in school history.

Diedrick and Thunder Collins, also a junior, have formed a talented tandem, capable of running inside and out. "They complement each other very well," Cornhusker Coach Frank Solich said.

Diedrick has earned a reputation for being a "banger," a physical, inside-the-tackles runner, "the kind of back that could take rep after rep, carry after carry for you," said Solich.

As proof of that, Solich called his



Junior Dahrran Diedrick has earned the reputation for being a "banger," a physical, inside-the-tackles runner.

number 32 times against Notre Dame.

While Diedrick has shown the

endurance to carry a sizeable load, Collins has shed the reputation he brought with him from East Los

Angeles Community College of being a finesse runner.

That reputation is no longer deserved, if it ever was, according to Solich.

The 6-foot-2, 190-pound Collins "shows power and aggressiveness in his running style," Solich said. "I wouldn't classify him as a finesse runner. That doesn't give him enough credit because a finesse runner is a guy that every opportunity, tries to do things that are going to avoid contact."

Collins has broken tackles and gone into contact when he's been cornered. "Yet when he has a chance to make a big play, he'll go ahead and make quick cuts, accelerate off those cuts and do it in a manner that he's always gaining yards and not taking a lot of time to do it," said Solich.

"That's the style of back we're after. And that's what he's turning into."

Collins claims he has always been a physical runner, and a check of film from when he played in junior college would support that. He punished "a lot of linebackers," he said.

But he was heavier then, 210 to 215 pounds. In his one junior college season, he rushed for 1,548 yards and 23 touchdowns in 10 games — only seven of which he started.

Being physical doesn't necessarily depend on size, according to Diedrick, who weighs 225 pounds. "It's just your mentality, how you go in there," he said. "You just suck it up. You don't want to have somebody knock your head off. You've got to put it to them before they put it to you."

That's been Nebraska's running backs philosophy for as long as anyone can remember. It has been passed down from the late Mike Corgan to Solich and then to Gillespie.

Corgan, who was known as "Iron Mike," coached both Solich and Gillespie.

"It's a mindset, that you're going to make each guy pay for tackling you," Gillespie said. "Sometimes the other guy may win. But hopefully the cumulative effect is going to show in the third and fourth quarter. That's our philosophy, trying to wear

people down. You've got to have a tenacity about you."

Though Collins had that tenacity when he arrived, it took him a season as a backup to understand its importance in Nebraska's system. Early on, "I was pretty much trying to score a touchdown every play," he said. "So instead of running into contact, I would try to juke a guy to get to the outside."

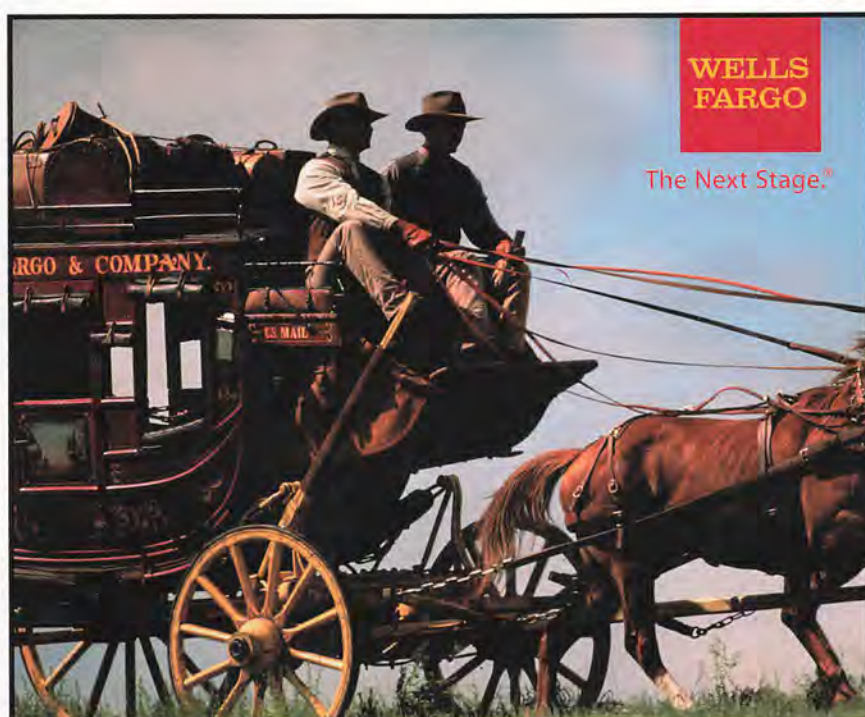
He would try to out-run defenders, relying on his speed.

Getting to the outside is much easier at the junior college level, and when he couldn't do that at Nebraska, "I was taking shots I

shouldn't have been taking," he said. "Coach Gillespie was like, 'You should be giving the hit. You shouldn't be taking the hit.' In two-a-days last year, I would ball up to get ready for a hit and I wasn't running through the tackle, delivering the blow."

According to time-tested coaching wisdom, when a collision is imminent, it's best to square up rather than let up. And "I think that's true," said Collins. "But it takes heart."

"Some people get scared and they don't want to come into a hit real fast, so they hesitate. But I think if you come in full speed . . . nine times



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out of 10 you might get through it."

Diedrick agrees. "That's how it is," he said. "As long as you're not the one trying to ease up, you're going to get the best out of it. That's something you learn growing up, from coaches in high school and stuff. The harder you go, the less chance you have of getting hurt."

He's been durable, averaging about 20 carries a game. And he has continued to improve.

While Collins has shown he can get the tough yards inside, Diedrick has shown he can make plays. "Coming into the season, we weren't really sure about Dahrran being able

to be a great option back, catching option (pitches)," Gillespie said. "He's had some problems before."

"But he's been great at that. He's taking care of the football, which has really been a plus."

Gillespie was sure that Diedrick would run tough, however. That was apparent from the beginning.

"I think Dahrran is a very genuine guy," said Gillespie. "He's not there to win friends or please people. He so much wants to do things right and works very hard at being the perfect player."

And he won't back down, under any circumstances. ■

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Determination

***Senior walk-on
Nelson's mindset
has served him
well through
some trying times***

Casey Nelson lacked the size and the background to play defensive tackle at Nebraska. He was 6-foot-2 and 210 pounds, and he had played middle linebacker on an eight-man high school team.

What the senior walk-on didn't lack, however, was determination.

"I knew when I came down here I was going to play. I wasn't going to give up," he said. "I had it in my mind that I would do whatever it took to get on the field. I wasn't going to sit back and watch games, just be a practice player. I was going to get on that field, contributing.

"I set my mind right away, pretty much in high school."

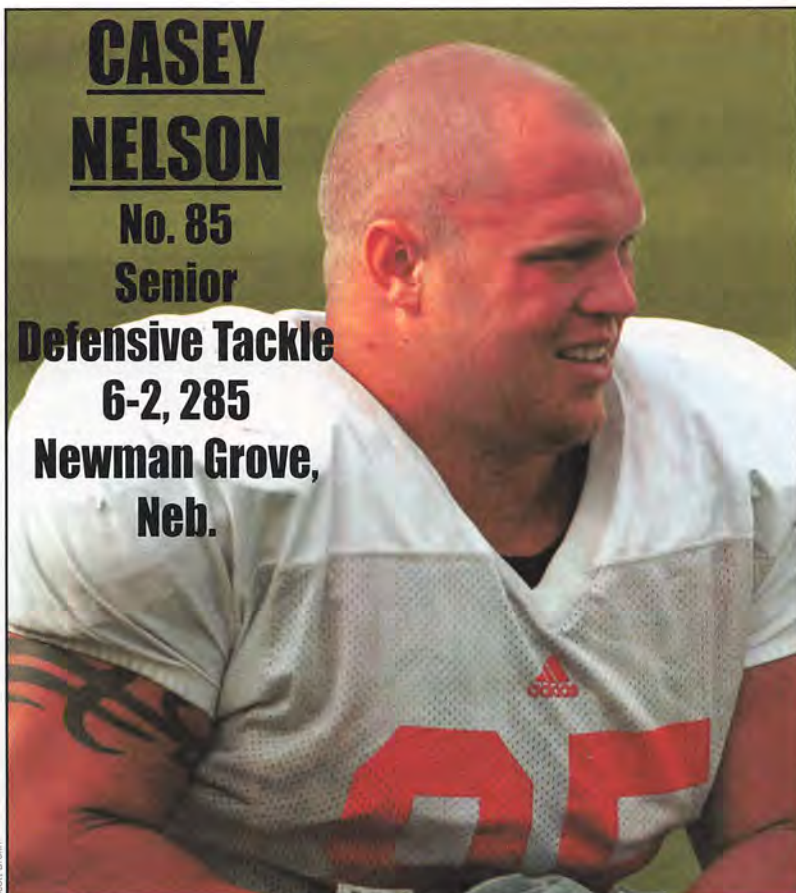
The only uncertainty, if there was any, was because of his love of basketball. Some small schools offered him scholarships to play basketball and football. And such offers were attractive.

Even now, at 6-2 and 285 pounds, Nelson occasionally daydreams about asking Coach Barry Collier if he could try out for the Cornhusker basketball team when football season is over.

"I'm not going to lie, it's still in the back of my mind," he said with a smile.

When it came time to make his college decision, Nebraska football won the tug-of-war. Scholarship or not, if he had gone to a small school to play both sports, "I wouldn't have had my whole heart in it like I would here," he said. "This was always my first love, to play for the Huskers. Kids all around the state, they know

**CASEY
NELSON**
No. 85
Senior
Defensive Tackle
6-2, 285
**Newman Grove,
Neb.**



how it is. They'd give anything just to come down here and be a part of this."

That mindset has served him well through some trying times.

Nelson had some idea of what he was getting into after attending Nebraska's summer camp before his junior and senior years in high school. After his second camp, he discussed the possibility of walking on with Craig Bohl, the linebackers coach and now the defensive coordinator.

When it was suggested that he try defensive tackle, he didn't argue. There were a lot of walk-on linebackers but not a lot of defensive linemen, so he decided to give it a try.

"I was like, 'I'll do whatever it takes to help the team,'" he said.

His willingness to try was rewarded with the opportunity to line up on the scout squad against offensive linemen such as Aaron Taylor, Jon Zatechka, Eric Anderson and Fred Pollack.

Initially, they out-weighted him by as much as 80 or 90 pounds.

"There were some big guys, but I knew I had to stick with it if I wanted to fulfill my dreams," said Nelson. Also, "in the back of your mind, you're just so thankful to be here."

If he could find something positive in taking a daily pounding from a national championship offensive line in practice, he couldn't in the case of a shoulder injury suffered during his first spring.

He was fighting through a dou-

ble-team in group work and got hit from the side. The shoulder popped, and he ended up having to undergo surgery to repair extensive ligament damage.

He was sidelined for a year and a half, a frustrating experience, particularly because he thought, at most, he would be out for six to eight months. "I wanted to get back out there," he said.

He made the best of the situation, however, working in the weight room to get stronger and gain some weight — he weighed about 250 when the injury occurred. When he returned for the 1999 season, his weight was approaching what would be appropriate for a defensive tackle — 270 or 280.

He lived in the weight room during his rehabilitation, he said.

Because of the time lost because of the shoulder injury, Nelson plans to follow Dan Hadenfeldt and John Gibson in applying to the NCAA for an additional season of eligibility.

The application can't be filed until after this season, which would be his last. And there's no guarantee. But he's optimistic about his chances, as well as those of Jason Lohr, another senior defensive tackle who suffered a season-ending knee injury in the Notre Dame game.

"Hopefully, we'll both be back," said Nelson, who's in the rotation with Jeremy Slechta, Jon Clanton, Ryon Bingham, Patrick Kabongo and Manaia Brown. "They say there's a pretty good chance."

Even so, he realized after the Oklahoma game that his time at Nebraska could be coming to an end, that "I've only got one more time to play here (Memorial Stadium), against Kansas State. There's a chance that could be my last," he said. And now that game has been played, too.

If the NCAA were to grant him another season, he wouldn't have anything more to prove. But he would still be driven by the determination that enabled him to overcome some long odds.

"My close friends and family, they believe in me," he said. "But I think a lot of people really did doubt me. And that's what helped me get going, too. That drove me to work even harder." ■

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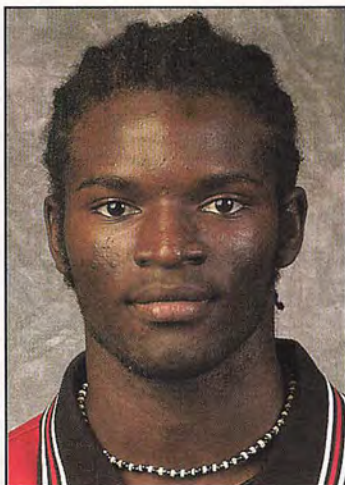


Nebraska 31

Kansas State 21

Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch, playing his final game at Memorial Stadium, breaks a tackle on a 14-yard run for the game's first touchdown.

Husker Player of the Game



Willie Amos

Right Place, Right Time

Willie Amos was overly modest about his two interceptions.

"I was just in the right place at the right time," the sophomore free safety said. "It was a combination of technique and play calling by the coaches that allowed me to be in the right spot."

Right spot or not, he had to make the plays, which were pivotal in Nebraska's 31-21 victory against Kansas State. He returned the first interception 20 yards for the game's second touchdown, and he returned the second 50 yards to set up a 28-yard Josh Brown field goal early in the fourth quarter.

"Willie Amos really played well," said defensive coordinator Craig Bohl.

His interceptions were "very big," Coach Frank Solich said. "It was obvious his interceptions were outstanding. It was great to see him come back and have this kind of game."

Amos has been hampered by a hamstring problem, which sidelined him for three games.

"This should give him a great deal of confidence," said Solich.

The interceptions were the third and fourth of the season for Amos, who now leads the team. The last Cornhusker to intercept two passes in a game was Mike Brown, against Texas A&M in 1999. ■

Steppi



ing It Up



Huskers use vintage drive to take charge on Senior Day

By Mike Babcock
Photos by Scott Bruhn

The drive was vintage Nebraska, timeless, as enduring as the inscriptions preserved at the four corners of Memorial Stadium. It covered 77 yards on 15 plays in 7 minutes and 19 seconds.

And it produced a touchdown that served notice the Cornhuskers weren't ready to give up dreams of playing for a national championship in the Rose Bowl game on Jan. 3, 2002.

The drive began with Dahrran Diedrick's 5-yard run, and it ended with his 2-yard run. And all but one of the 15 plays were runs, including eight carries by Diedrick for 41 yards.

The one pass came on third-and-12 from the Nebraska 32-yard line, a completion from Eric Crouch to John Gibson, good for 17 yards and, more importantly, a first down.

In the aftermath of the Cornhuskers' 31-21 victory against Kansas State, that pass, on a "shoot route," might easily have been forgotten. After all, Crouch threw only seven passes, completing three with two interceptions. But the third of his completions was critical, keeping the drive alive.

Junior I-back Dahrran Diedrick gained 41 of his team-leading 108 yards on the crucial scoring drive to open the second half. The Huskers marched 77 yards in 15 plays and 7:19.

Nebraska had run from the same formation just prior to the pass, and "it was obvious if things go right, John would have a chance on that," Coach Frank Solich said afterward.

"It was a very big completion," said Crouch. "John just sat there in the hole, and the backers were in a zone underneath. John did the best job he could of putting himself in the right area."

And he, Crouch, did the best job he could of putting the ball where it needed to be.

To understand the significance of the pass, and the greater context of the touchdown drive, consider that Nebraska trailed 14-13, following an unlikely set of circumstances that saw Kansas State score two touchdowns in the final 2:57 of the first half to stun a Senior Day crowd of 77,818.

The Wildcats' first touchdown came after a blocked punt gave them possession at the Nebraska 7-yard line, and the second came on quarterback Ell Roberson's only complete pass in 11 attempts, a 32-yard heave on third-and-seven with no Kansas State timeouts and just 6 seconds remaining.

Those scores offset a 13-0 start, fashioned earlier in the quarter with Crouch's 14-yard touchdown run and Willie Amos' 20-yard interception return for a touchdown 23 seconds later.

A missed extra-point kick after the Amos touchdown, following a 15-yard personal foul penalty against the Cornhuskers, seemed of little consequence at the time. Nebraska appeared to be poised to roll over the Wildcats, as has been commonplace at Memorial Stadium in recent seasons.

Not surprisingly, when Nebraska went to the locker room at halftime, a lot of defensive players "were pretty upset," said senior middle linebacker Jamie Burrow, who finished with 12 tackles.

"We felt there shouldn't be 14 points against us."

So before the coaches entered the locker room, some of the

Cornhuskers' 23 seniors spoke up. Because of the leadership they exhibited, "I think it was a little bit of a defining moment," defensive coordinator Craig Bohl said. "Our defensive players were certainly frustrated."

Despite that frustration, however, the locker room might have been "a little quieter than normal," said Solich, "because I just feel like they (players) felt like they had let a little bit slip away. So we just went to work as usual at halftime, putting up plays and talking through some things."

"We had shown the ability to move the ball. We had shown the ability to make plays on defense, make plays on special teams . . . we needed to come out and do that the second half."

"They were certainly challenged, and I think they responded very well."

That was reflected in the touch-down drive to start the second half. And it was reflected on Nebraska's first defensive series after the intermission. The Cornhuskers allowed a first down before forcing a punt that DeJuan Groce returned 60 yards for a touchdown, to increase the lead to 28-14.

Josh Brown added a 28-yard field goal 26 seconds into the fourth quarter, following a second Amos interception and 50-yard return, to cap Nebraska's 11th consecutive victory. Kansas State might have been adding to the lead instead of taking it late in the first half if it could have capitalized on three scoring opportunities in the first quarter.

The Wildcats reached the Nebraska 27-yard line on their first possession, only to lose 25 yards on consecutive plays and be forced to punt on fourth-and-34 at the Cornhusker 48.

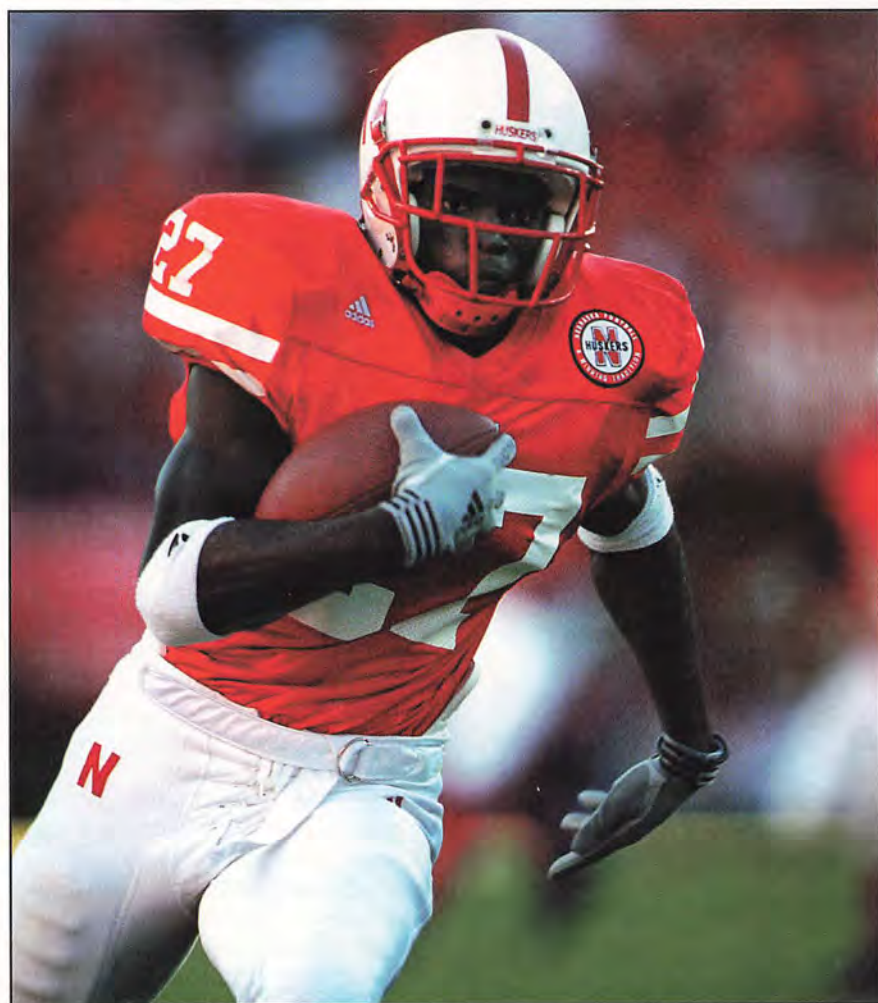
They recovered a Dahrran Diedrick fumble at the Nebraska 20-yard line and could get no closer than the 15, settling for a 34-yard field goal attempt that Tim Demerath blocked.

And they took possession at the Cornhusker 38-yard line following an interception of a Crouch pass. But Roberson threw three incomplete passes under pressure, and they forced to punt.

Nebraska's defensive effort in the first quarter, "had a big impact," said Bohl.

"At that time, we could have let the game slip away a little bit."

The Cornhusker defenders refused to let the game slip away, even though



Sophomore free safety Willie Amos races 20 yards for his first career touchdown on the first of his two interceptions. He leads the team with four pickoffs.

they were on the field for more than nine minutes of the first quarter, giving the offense time to get rolling.

Diedrick and Crouch each rushed for more than 100 yards against a Kansas State defense that went into

4TH & 1 INCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Kansas State Game

POOCHES

Nebraska tried to avoid giving Kansas State's Aaron Lockett an opportunity to return kickoffs by having Josh Brown "pooch" kick the ball, forcing someone else to field it. "The last thing we wanted to do was set ourselves up for being demoralized by a great kickoff return," Frank Solich said.

Lockett went into the game averaging 33.2 yards per kickoff return. Among his 10 kickoff returns was a 97-yarder for a touchdown. He returned two for 19 yards against the Cornhuskers.

Josh Scobey had KSU's best kickoff return, a 24-yarder in the fourth quarter.

SACK ATTACK CONTINUES

The Cornhuskers had three quarterback sacks, led by weakside linebacker Mark Vedral's 1.5. Nebraska has had at least one sack in each game this season, with 39 total for 328 yards in losses. Middle linebacker Jamie Burrow and rush end Demoiné Adams also were involved in sacks.

THIRD TIME NO CHARM

Tim Demerath, one of 23 Nebraska seniors dressing for their final home game, blocked a punt in the first quarter. It was the third consecutive season in which the Cornhuskers have blocked at least one kick against Kansas State. They have blocked four kicks, three of them punts, this season.

STREAK SNAPPED

Eric Crouch's 14-yard touchdown run with 9:06 remaining in the second quarter ended a string of 10 quarters in which Kansas State had not allowed a touchdown.

The rushing touchdown was the 57th of Crouch's career. He ranks fifth all-time in NCAA Division I-A in rushing touchdowns and sixth among non-kickers in career scoring with 356 points.

FANCY PASSING, NOT

Crouch completed only 3-of-7 passes with two interceptions. But two of his completions were significant. He and Thunder Collins teamed on a 45-yard pass to set up the game's first touchdown, and he passed to John Gibson for 17 yards on third-and-12 in the touchdown drive to start the second half.

Kansas State's Eli Roberson completed just 1-of-11 passes with two interceptions. His one completion went to Aaron Lockett for 32 yards and a touchdown late in the first half.

Marc Dunn completed 3-of-7 passes, with one interception. "We had the momentum going into halftime with the long (Roberson) touchdown pass, then they came out in the second half and scored on a long touchdown drive and got the crowd back into the game," he said.

The Wildcats' inability to pass proved to be their undoing. "I am not a big believer in stats, but it is all right there — 37 yards passing, three interceptions and that's our demise," Coach Bill Snyder said. "Against a team like Nebraska, you can't do the things that we did and expect to have a chance."

Snyder acknowledged that his team had "some problems" passing.

"You can't throw the ball to the other team," he said. "That's not the way you execute your pass offense. You can throw it out of bounds. You can throw it in the dirt. You can go to the ground with it. You can do a lot of things. You just can't throw it to those other guys."

But the Wildcats did, three times.

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU


Twenty-three seniors were introduced before the game. "We are really glad the seniors get to go out as winners at home," said junior I-back Dahrran Diedrick. "I would hate to be on a team that let its seniors go out as losers."

DESERVES MORE

DeJuan Groce's 60-yard punt return for a touchdown was the longest of his career and his first for a score. His previous long return was 34 yards against Missouri. The return gave Nebraska a two-touchdown cushion. "When DeJuan got in, we were really happy," Diedrick said. He deserves a lot more."

INJURY REPORT

Reserve split end John Klem was helped off the field after suffering a sprained knee late in the second quarter. He did not return. Rover Philip Bland, a part-time starter as a true freshman, sat out with an ankle injury apparently suffered in the Kansas game. Coach Frank Solich, who had refused to comment on the injury situation much of the week, said in a radio interview Friday night that one player would be a game-time decision. He did not identify the player. ■



The Nebraska running game benefitted from the return of fullback Judd Davies (above), who had been sidelined by an ankle sprain suffered early in the Texas Tech game. He rushed for 23 yards.

the game ranked second nationally against the run. The Wildcats were allowing, on the average, 67.13 rushing yards per game. Diedrick rushed for 108 yards, Crouch for 106.

They combined to rush for 100 of those yards in the second half. "We just knew we had to go out there and run the football," said Diedrick. "We went right at them."

That was particularly the case on the touchdown drive to start the second half.

"I was real encouraged to see the fight and the drive and the energy they had in the second half," Solich said of his players. "I think the opening drive was really crucial for us."

In addition to the pass to Gibson, Crouch picked up first downs on two other third-down plays on the drive, gaining 2 yards on third-and-1 at his own 32-yard line and then running 17 yards to the Kansas State 1-yard line two plays before Diedrick took the ball into the end zone.

Diedrick was matter-of-fact in describing the drive. "That just says that when we know we have to get things done . . . we really bust it," he said. "We knew we could run up the middle on them."

That's been the basis of the offense since before Diedrick and his teammates were born. ■

2001 Schedule

(Team's current record)

1	Aug. 25	TCU (4-5), W 21-7	1-0
2	Sept. 1	Troy State (5-4), W 42-14	2-0
3	Sept. 8	Notre Dame (3-5), W 27-10	3-0
4	Sept. 20	Rice (7-3), W 48-3	4-0
5	Sept. 29	@ Missouri (4-5), W 36-3	5-0
6	Oct. 6	Iowa State (5-4), W 48-14	6-0
7	Oct. 13	@ Baylor (2-7), W 48-7	7-0
8	Oct. 20	Texas Tech (6-3), W 41-31	8-0
9	Oct. 27	Oklahoma (9-1), W 20-10	9-0
10	Nov. 3	@ Kansas (2-7), W 51-7	10-0
11	Nov. 10	Kansas State (4-5), W 31-21	11-0
12	Nov. 23	@ Colorado (7-2), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
	Dec. 1	Big 12 Championship at Irving, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC	

Big 12 at a Glance

North			
	Conf.	All	
Nebraska	7 0	11 0	
Colorado	6 1	8 2	
Iowa State	3 4	5 4	
Missouri	3 4	4 5	
Kansas State	2 5	4 5	
Kansas	1 6	2 7	
South			
	Conf.	All	
Texas	6 1	9 1	
Oklahoma	5 1	9 1	
Texas A&M	4 3	7 3	
Texas Tech	4 3	6 3	
Baylor	0 7	2 7	
Oklahoma State	0 6	2 7	

Nov. 10 results

Nebraska 31, Kansas State 21
Colorado 40, Iowa State 27
Oklahoma 31, Texas A&M 10
Texas 59, Kansas 0
Texas Tech 49, Oklahoma State 30
Missouri 41, Baylor 24

Nonconference opponents

Rice 59, Tulsa 32
Troy State 44, Louisiana-Monroe 12
Alabama-Birmingham 38, TCU 17
Notre Dame idle

Upcoming Opponent's Schedule

Colorado (8-2)	
Aug. 26	Fresno State, L 24-22
Sept. 1	Colorado State, W 41-14
Sept. 8	San Jose State, W 51-15
Sept. 22	Kansas, W 27-16
Oct. 6	at Kansas State, W 16-6
Oct. 13	Texas A&M, W 31-21
Oct. 20	at Texas, L 41-7
Oct. 27	at Oklahoma State, W 22-19
Nov. 3	Missouri, W 38-24
Nov. 10	at Iowa State, W 40-27
Nov. 23	Nebraska

Remaining Big 12 Games

Nov. 17	
Oklahoma	at Texas Tech
Iowa State	at Kansas
Missouri	at Kansas State
Oklahoma State	at Baylor
Nov. 23	
Nebraska	at Colorado
Texas	at Texas A&M
Nov. 24	
Oklahoma State	at Oklahoma

Game 12

At Colorado Nov. 23

Location: Boulder, Colo.

Enrollment: 26,035

2001 record: 8-2

Coach: Gary Barnett, 3rd season

Series: Nebraska leads 32-14-2



2:30 p.m. CST (ABC)

Folsom Field, Boulder, Colo.

Buffalo to Watch

Tailback Cortlen Johnson became the first Colorado player to gain 100 yards both rushing and receiving in a game in the victory over Iowa State. The 5-foot-9, 200-pound senior rushed 27 times for 172 yards and one touchdown and caught six passes for 105 yards and



another TD.

Johnson has led the Buffaloes in rushing the past two seasons and had good success against Nebraska, with 135 yards rushing as a sophomore and 155 yards and three touchdowns last year in Lincoln.

Quick Facts

Since losing their opener to Fresno State (24-22), Colorado has won eight out of nine games, including three straight. Their only loss in that stretch came at Texas (41-7).

The Buffs will be looking for revenge after last year's narrow loss in Lincoln. CU took a 32-31 lead with just 47 seconds to play, but the Huskers quickly drove downfield, and Josh Brown kicked a 29-yard game-winning field goal as time expired. Now they face the Huskers again, with a berth in the Dec. 1 Big 12 Championship game on the line. "I'm real proud of where this team is," Coach Gary Barnett said. "We finally are in position for a big game, and it will be a big game. We've been shooting for it for 50 weeks."

Quarterback Craig Ochs, who passed for 1,778 yards (254 at Nebraska) and seven touchdowns as a true freshman, has been sidelined for three games with a strained ankle/foot tendon. His replacement, senior Bobby Pesavento, finished 16-of-25 for 230 yards with no interceptions against Iowa State. He has passed for 921 yards and six touchdowns, compared to 1,220 and seven touchdowns for Ochs.

Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	9	Wilson Thomas**	6-6	215	Jr.
	81	Ben Cornelsen*	5-10	190	Jr.
LT	58	Dave Volk***	6-5	300	Sr.
	73	Scott Koethe*	6-5	310	Jr.
LG	77	Toniú Fonoti**	6-4	340	Jr.
	74	Steve Altstadt*	6-5	295	Sr.
C	52	John Garrison**	6-4	285	Jr.
	53	Matt Shook*	6-2	300	Jr.
RG	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
	59	Wes Cody*	6-2	295	Jr.
RT	68	Dan Waldrop*	6-5	330	So.
	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
TE	87	Tracey Wistrom**	6-5	240	Sr.
	99	Aaron Golliday*	6-4	285	Jr.
QB	7	Eric Crouch***	6-1	200	Sr.
	10	Jammal Lord*	6-2	215	So.
FB	4	Judd Davies*	6-0	240	So.
	45	Steve Kriewald	5-10	255	Fr.
IB	30	Dahrran Diedrick**	6-0	225	Jr.
	1	Thunder Collins*	6-2	190	Jr.
WB	8	John Gibson***	6-0	195	Sr.
	89	Troy Hassebrook**	6-4	220	Jr.
PK	26	Josh Brown*	6-2	190	Jr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chris Kelsay**	6-5	270	Jr.
	92	Justin Smith**	6-4	260	Jr.
NT	55	Jon Clanton**	6-2	280	Jr.
	59	Ryon Bingham	6-3	275	So.
DT	56	Jeremy Slechta***	6-6	285	So.
	85	Casey Nelson**	6-2	285	Sr.
RR	98	Demoiné Adams**	6-2	235	Jr.
	95	J.P. Wichmann**	6-4	230	Sr.
SLB	43	Scott Shanle**	6-2	235	Jr.
	47	Ira Cooper	6-2	220	Fr.
MLB	48	Jamie Burrow***	6-1	245	Sr.
	38	Barrett Ruud	6-2	220	Fr.
WLB9		Mark Vedral**	6-1	210	Sr.
	17	T.J. Hollowell*	6-0	220	So.
LCB	3	Keyuo Craver**	5-10	190	Sr.
	28	Pat Ricketts*	5-11	180	So.
FS	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
or	27	Willie Amost*	6-0	185	So.
ROV	21	Philip Bland	6-0	205	Fr.
	2	Aaron Terpening**	5-11	200	Jr.
RCB	5	DeJuan Groce**	5-10	190	Jr.
or	16	Erwin Swiney***	6-0	185	Sr.
P	19	Kyle Larson	6-0	205	So.

COLORADO OFFENSE

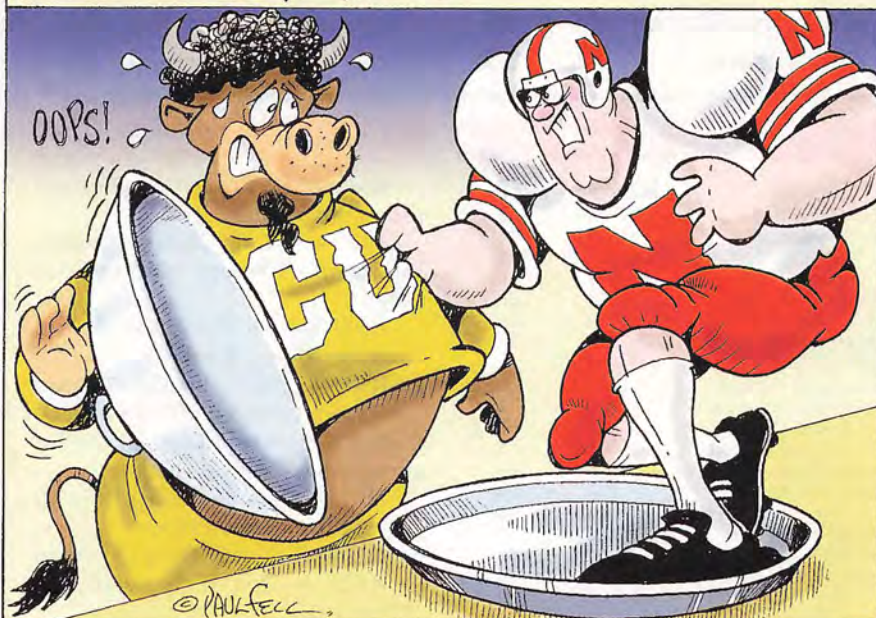
WR	14	Cedric Cormier***	5-11	180	Sr.
	15	Matt Brunson	5-11	180	Sr.
ST	77	Justin Bates*	6-4	295	Jr.
	70	Rawle King	6-6	300	Jr.
SG	62	Marwan Hage*	6-3	290	So.
	52	Derek Stermlich	6-6	270	Fr.
C	78	Wayne Lucier	6-4	295	Jr.
	74	Ryan Gray*	6-3	290	Jr.
TG	65	Andre Gurode***	6-4	320	Sr.
	76	Josh Foster*	6-6	300	Jr.
TT	71	Victor Rogers***	6-7	320	Sr.
	69	Carl Allis	6-5	315	So.
TE	89	Daniel Graham***	6-3	245	Sr.
	47	Quinn Spiewniski*	6-7	250	So.
QB	4	Bobby Pesavento*	6-5	225	Sr.
	10	Robert Hodge	5-11	180	Jr.
TB	27	Cortlen Johnson***	5-9	200	Sr.
	42	Bobby Purify*	6-0	195	So.
FB	33	Brandon Drumm**	6-2	230	Jr.
	45	David Andrews*	6-4	240	Sr.
WR	80	Derek McCoy*	6-3	210	So.
	5	Roman Hollowell***	5-6	165	Sr.
K	3	Jeremy Flores*	5-10	180	Sr.

COLORADO DEFENSE

DE	99	Tyler Brayton**	6-6	265	Jr.
	60	Matt McChesney*	6-4	280	So.
DT	97	Justin Bannan***	6-3	295	Sr.
	46	Brandon Boswell	5-10	235	Jr.
DT	98	Brandon Dabbdoub	6-1	285	Fr.
	94	DeAndre Fluellen	6-1	300	So.
DE	30	Marques Harris*	6-2	225	So.
	90	Sam Wilder	6-5	265	Fr.
ILB	54	Sean Tufts*	6-4	230	So.
	56	Dryden Dunsmore	6-2	215	So.
ILB	43	Joey Johnson*	6-2	220	Jr.
	34	Andy Peeke***	6-0	200	Sr.
OLB	16	Drew Wahlores**	6-3	235	Jr.
	12	Kory Mossotti**	6-3	230	Jr.
LCB	4	Donald Strickland**	5-10	180	Jr.
	20	Clyde Surrell*	5-10	180	So.
SS	31	Michael Lewis**	6-1	215	Sr.
	29	Matt Duren	6-0	195	So.
FS	17	Medford Mooror*	6-2	190	Sr.
	49	Jeff Brunson	6-1	190	Sr.
RCB	6	Phil Jackson*	6-1	180	So.
	26	Roderick Snead**	6-0	180	Jr.
P	8	Mark Mariscal*	6-2	190	Jr.

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

NEBRASKA vs. COLORADO



NOV. 23, 2001

COLORADO'S PLANS TO CELEBRATE A HUSKER UPSET DON'T TURN OUT THE WAY THEY HOPE!

PICKS

Brian Hill
Editor

Colorado has been waiting for this one since Josh Brown's game-winning field goal sailed through the uprights as time expired last year in Lincoln. The last five meetings have been decided by a total of 15 points. The winner each of those times will take another close one this time around. **Nebraska 34, Colorado 31**

Mike Babcock
Contributing Editor

The Buffaloes have a source of consternation for Nebraska in recent seasons. The Cornhuskers have escaped with dramatic victories, however, and the same should be true this time.

Nebraska 31, Colorado 21

NEBRASKA AT COLORADO

Terry Douglass
Grand Island Independent
Sports Editor

Once again, Nebraska's trip to Boulder looms as scary proposition for the Huskers. The thin mountain air and thick Colorado confidence this season should make this one an absolute dogfight, but that's nothing new when these two teams get together

Nebraska 31, Colorado 30

Mark Collins
Buffalo Sports News
Editor

Colorado has outplayed the Cornhuskers the past three years and lost. The Buffaloes are playing with a potent running game for the first time in years. Expect them to get the W this time around.

Colorado 31, Nebraska 27

BY THE NUMBERS

Nebraska vs. Kansas State

Nov. 10, 2001 • Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.

Score By Quarters

Kansas State	0	14	0	7	—	21
Nebraska	0	13	15	3	—	31

Team Stats

	KSU	NU
First Downs	14	18
Rushing	12	16
Passing	2	2
Penalty	0	0
Rushing Attempts	44	58
Yards Gained Rushing	279	285
Yards Lost Rushing	40	21
Net Yards Rushing	239	264
Net Yards Passing	37	60
Passes Attempted	18	7
Passes Completed	4	3
Had Intercepted	3	2
Total Plays	62	65
Total Net Yards	276	324
Avg. Gain Per Play	4.5	5.0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties-Yards	7-32	4-41
Punts-Yards	6-235	14-113
Avg. Per Punt	39.2	28.3
Punt Returns-Yards	2-30	3-70
Interceptions-Yards	2-4	3-70
Fumble Returns-Yards	1-1	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	3-43	4-74
Possession Time	28:34	31:26

Scoring

NU — Eric Crouch 14-yard run (Josh Brown kick)

NU — Willie Amos 20-yard interception return (Brown kick failed)

KSU — Eli Roberson 5-yard run (Joe Rheem kick)

KSU — Aaron Lockett 32-yard pass from Roberson (Rheem kick)

NU — Dahrran Diedrick 2-yard run (Diedrick run)

NU — DeJuan Groce 60-yard punt return (Brown kick)

NU — Brown 28-yard field goal

KSU — Joe Hall 1-yard run (Rheem kick)

Att. — 77,818

Weather — sunny

Temp. — 69

Individual Statistics

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Diedrick, D.	24	108	4.5	19	1
Crouch, E.	23	106	4.6	17	1
Collins, T.	6	27	4.5	18	0
Davies, J.	5	23	4.6	6	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	3-7-2	42.9	60	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Collins, T.	1	45	45.0	45	0
Gibson, J.	1	17	17.0	17	0
Davies, J.	1	-2	-2.0	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	3	113	37.7	44
Team	1	0	0.0	0

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Groce, D.	2	70	35.0	60	1
Craver, K.	1	0	0.0	0	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	3	63	21.0	24	0
Ringenberg, K.	1	11	11.0	11	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Burrow, J.	5	7	12	1-17	0	1-17
Booker, D.	4	4	8	0	0	0
Vedral, M.	3	4	7	3-15	0	1.5-13
Shanle, S.	4	1	5	0	0	0
Kelsay, C.	2	3	5	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.J.	3	1	4	0	0	0
Amos, W.	2	2	4	0	2-70	0
Slechta, J.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Ruud, B.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Craver, K.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Groce, D.	1	1	2	1-3	0	0
Nelson, C.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Thomas, W.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Demerath, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Schlotting, C.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Clanton, J.	1	0	1	1-3	0	0
Smith, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Diedrick, D.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Rutherford, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0

Adams, D.	0	1	1	1-5	0	0.5-5
Ricketts, P.	0	1	1	0	1-0	0
Bingham, R.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Ringenberg, K.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Cooper, I.	0	1	1	0	0	0

KANSAS STATE

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Robertson, E.	16	119	7.4	43	1
Hall, J.	8	48	6.0	22	1
Scobey, J.	14	36	2.6	6	0
Sproles, D.	2	24	12.0	20	0
Cartwright, R.	4	12	3.0	10	3

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Robertson, E.	1-11-2	9.1	32	0
Dunn, M.	3-7-1	42.9	5	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Lockett, A.	2	40	20.0	32	1
Cartwright, R.	1	0	0.0	0	0
Scobey, J.	1	-3	-3.0	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Ronsick, M.	6	235	39.2	47

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Lockett, A.	1	17	17.0	17	0
Newman, T.	1	13	13.0	13	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Scobey, J.	1	24	24.0	24	0
Lockett, A.	2	19	9.5	11	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
McGraw, J.	8	6	14	1-4	1-0	0
Buhl, J.	7	6	13	1-1	0	0
Pierce, T.	2	10	12	2-3	0	0
Reese, T.	4	4	8	0	0	0
Leber, B.	2	6	8	0	0	0
Newman, T.	4	3	7	1-5	0	0
Washington, R.	4	0	4	0	0	0
Yates, D.	3	1	4	0	1-4	0
Shull, A.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Tyler, D.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Bryant, H.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Togiai, J.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Hickman, B.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Williams, M.	1	0	1	1-8	0	0
Roberson, E.	1	0	1	0	0	0



Nebraska nose tackle Jon Clanton tackles KSU quarterback Eli Roberson for a loss.

2001 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Diedrick, D.	10	217	1,205	120.5	13
Crouch, E.	11	185	953	86.6	16
Collins, T.	11	83	586	53.3	5
Davies, J.	10	38	229	22.9	4
Grixby, D.	7	25	104	14.9	0
Lord, J.	6	22	83	13.8	2
Kriewald, S.	10	17	71	7.1	0
Davis, J.	11	8	61	5.5	1
Cornelsen, B.	10	2	33	3.3	0
Kastl, P.	8	8	32	4.0	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	11	92-161-8	57.1	1,312	7
Lord, J.	6	5-8-1	62.5	65	0
Stuntz, M.	9	1-1-0	100.0	63	1

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Thomas, W.	11	34	507	14.9	46.1	3
Wistrom, T.	10	19	290	15.3	29.0	2
Collins, T.	11	15	170	11.3	15.5	0
Gibson, J.	11	14	229	16.4	20.8	1
Bowling, J.	10	4	75	18.8	7.5	1
Ringenberg, K.	7	3	49	16.3	7.0	0
Crouch, E.	10	1	63	63.0	6.3	1

FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
Brown, J.	10	13	9	43
DeAngelis, S.	8	3	2	21

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	52	2,201	42.3	68

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Groce, D.	32	461	14.4	60	1
Craver, K.	22	246	11.2	50	0
Cornelsen, B.	10	124	12.4	71	1

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	20	517	25.9	43	0

DEFENSE

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Burrow, J.	11	25	53	78	12-50	0	3.5-38
Craver, K.	11	33	23	56	2-3	3-97	0
Vedral, M.	11	23	32	55	7-25	1-0	2.5-14
Booker, D.	11	30	21	51	1-1	1-18	0
Shanle, S.	11	25	25	50	8-36	0	3-25
Ruud, B.	11	17	31	48	6-15	0	0.5-3
Kelsay, C.	11	24	22	46	17-58	0	5-24
Slechta, J.	11	15	22	37	3-9	0	1-7

TEAM STATISTICS

Total Offensive Yards	4,862	2,864				
Plays	794	745				
Average Per Play	6.1	3.8				
Average Per Game	442.0	260.4				
Net Rushing Yards	3,422	1,023				
Attempts	623	366				
TDs Rushing	42	6				
Net Passing Yards	1,440	1,841				
Completions	98	162				
Average Per Pass	8.4	4.9				
Average Per Catch	14.7	11.4				
Average Per Game	130.9	167.4				
TDs Passing	8	7				
Sacks By-Yards	39-328	7-53				
Fumbles-Lost	22-12	19-7				
Penalties-Yards	61-594	70-526				
Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
NU	113	122	86	92	0	413
Opponents	30	56	17	24	0	127

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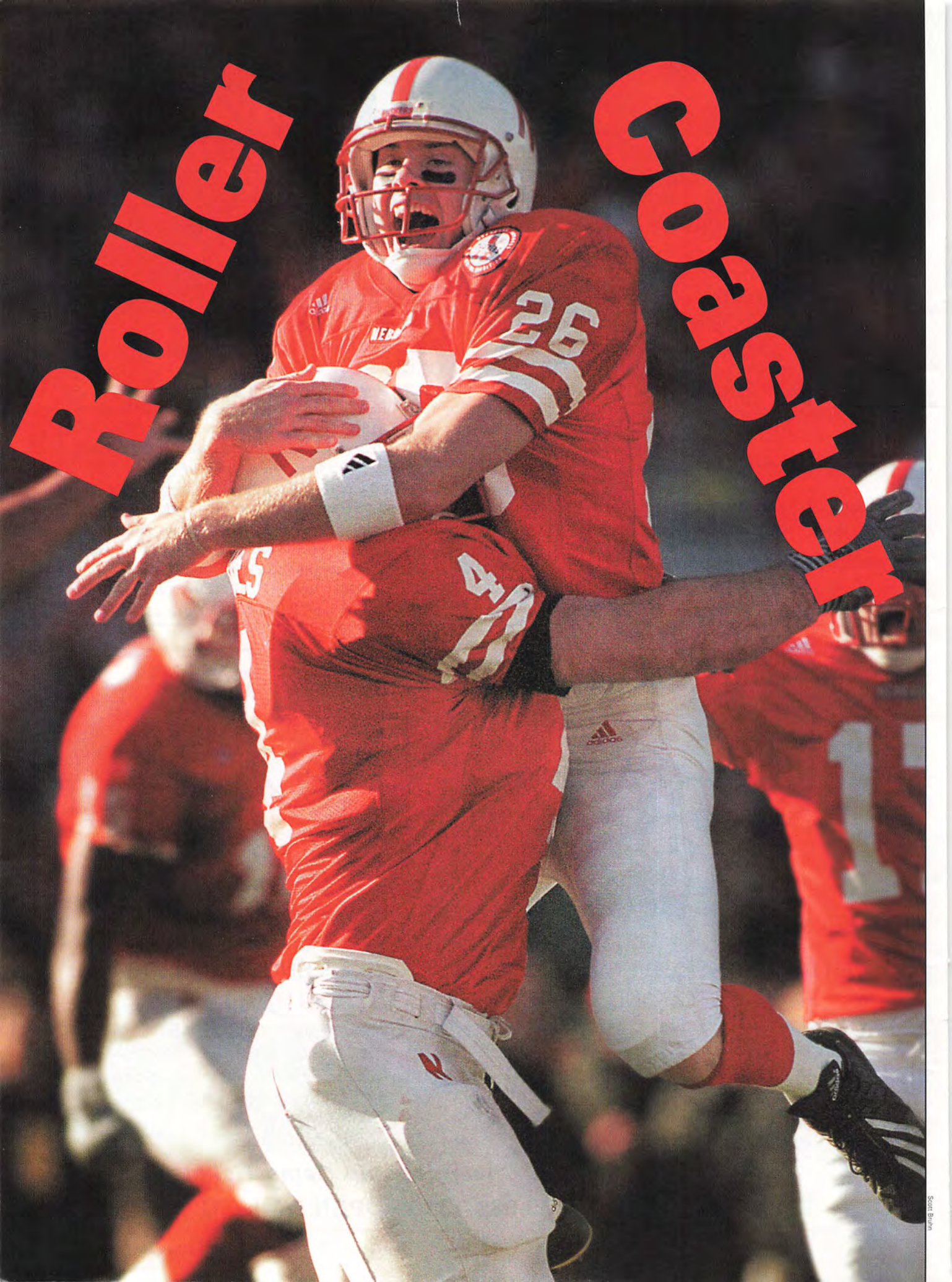
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Ride

Brown has had his ups and downs since kicking winner vs. Colorado

By Mike Babcock

A lot has happened since Josh Brown kicked a 29-yard field goal as time elapsed to give Nebraska a dramatic, 34-32 victory against Colorado at Memorial Stadium a year ago.

Some has been good. Much has not. Even so, "I'm probably more positive now than I was before," Brown said recently. "I've brought all the good out of the worst situation in my life.

"Going through what I went through and then coming out of it has made me see things differently. I think there's good in all bad things. I believed that before. But I believe it even more now."

The particulars have been sufficiently publicized. Brown initiated an off-field incident involving a former girlfriend and was punished both by the legal system and by Coach Frank Solich. That's in the past. Brown has moved on. And the ex-girlfriend remains one of his biggest fans, he said.

Josh Brown (26) leaps into the arms of fullback Judd Davies after kicking a 29-yard field goal as time expired to give Nebraska a 34-32 win over Colorado last November in Lincoln.

It merits mention here only by way of explaining the reaction by some who don't know him. He wonders sometimes exactly what fans are thinking when he runs onto the field.

"They judge me now," he said. "That's always going to come into play."


Such judgment is human nature, of course. And, after all, Brown did create the situation for which he is being judged. He doesn't deny that. But the judgment can be more severe because of what he does on a football field. Being a kicker doesn't allow any margin for error, athletically or personally.

For some — and it's probably a

relative few — "when I succeed, when I help this team out, I think they forget about it. All they see then is the kicker that helped the team," said Brown. "But if I fail, if I do something wrong, I'm 'just a criminal anyway, so what does it matter?'

"That's what some people, a very small percentage but some, may think."

Until the off-field incident, Brown was riding the crest of his Cornhusker career, following the field goal against Colorado. Even after two field goals and a long extra-point kick against Oklahoma — he's from Foyil, Okla. — the Colorado game remains the highlight of his



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Josh Brown became the No. 1 kicker as a redshirt freshman, making 14 of 20 field goal attempts in 1999.

athletic career.

"That was a kicker's dream," he said. "I don't think anything right now is going to surpass the excitement and the thrill of kicking the winning field goal and then having your team react the way it did. Everybody came together at that one moment, in those last seconds to win the game."

Colorado scored a touchdown and added a two-point conversion to take the lead with 47 seconds remaining. But the Cornhuskers responded by driving down the field on the passing of Eric Crouch and the receiving of John Gibson and Bobby Newcombe to set up Brown's game-winning kick.

Had he missed, he would have experienced an agony comparable to the ecstasy. It wouldn't have been more intense than that of his teammates. But it certainly would have been more public.

Even though his kick was the game's defining moment, it depended on everything that preceded it. When Brown ran onto the field, he heard someone say, "Here's the

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whole ball game."

That wasn't the whole game, however, he said. "It's a team effort."

The same was true of the previous season's Colorado game, when the Cornhuskers escaped Folsom Field with a 33-30 overtime victory, after Jeremy Aldrich missed a 37-yard field goal as time elapsed in regulation. Because of that miss, Aldrich had to deal with the down side of kicking.

"His life was hell, I know it was," Brown said. "I heard about things that happened to Jeremy, how the media scorned him for losing the game. It blows you out of the water."

Brown, who kicked field goals of 34 and 37 yards in the game, empathized with Aldrich. Opponents or not, they shared a common bond because of the position they played.

Brown was happy that the miss gave his team an opportunity to win. But watching Aldrich was "horrible because you know everyone's going to look at that one kick, regardless of how back and forth that game went, no matter how many lead changes there were," said Brown.

"No one remembers the missed blocks, the missed tackles, how good or how bad the offense and defense played. They remember the kick. Your heart goes out to the guy because you know he's going to suffer for everyone's mistakes, not just his. You don't want to be in his shoes.

"But there's always going to be that opportunity, where it comes down to a kick."

And especially, it seems, when Nebraska plays Colorado. Five or fewer points have decided the last five games between the teams. The Cornhuskers won 16-14 at Lincoln in 1998. They won 27-24 at Boulder in 1997, after leading 27-10 after three quarters. And they won 17-12 at Lincoln in 1996.

Colorado has staged dramatic comebacks in the last two games at Folsom Field, scoring 14 points in the final 3:16 of the 1997 game and outscoring Nebraska 24-0 in the fourth quarter of the 1999 game to force the overtime. Regardless of their record, the Buffaloes "show up to play," Brown said.

The Nebraska game is their

"Super Bowl," he said. "That's the great respect they show us, that they feel this is the biggest game of their whole season. It has taken me a while to realize that's the way it is for them. They are playing for everything that means something. It's their whole summer of workouts, their whole winter of workouts, put into one game. Emotionally, that's what it is for them.

"They get excited about this game, just like we get excited for Oklahoma. But it (beating Oklahoma) was just a step for us. For Colorado to beat us, the season doesn't even need to continue."

After being suspended for the first game this season, Brown returned to regain his job as the No. 1 place-kicker, only to lose it temporarily to red-shirted freshman Sandro DeAngelis.

It has been something of a roller coaster ride since the Colorado game a year ago. "It was very, very frustrating," said Brown. "You didn't know what the coaches were thinking."

He tried to deal with the uncertainty by being patient. "I wanted to be patient and allow the ability God gave me to come out," he said. "You rush things, you end up messing things up." ■



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SIDEOUT

Chilling Out



Cook's kinder, gentler approach helps Huskers play their best volleyball of year

By Todd Henrichs

Some coaches take a look in the mirror in search of answers. John Cook went to the videotape.

And Nebraska's head coach didn't necessarily like what he saw.

His players weren't communicating and allowed otherwise harmless attacks to fall on the Huskers' side of the net. There were other errors, too, each uncharacteristic of a team most believe should be the best college volleyball has to offer this season.

But Cook fast-forwarded through those parts. He was watching Nebraska's bench, seeing first hand his own demeanor in the heart of the battle. What he saw were too many scowls, too many times with arms folded over notebook, or with back slumped and head buried in his chest.

He immediately vowed to change. And with a new body language came a lot more smiling faces around the Coliseum.

"The way he's changed his communication has helped us because it's easier when someone's encouraging you to do something rather than just demanding, 'Do this,' or 'Do that,'" Nebraska's Jenny Kropp said. "He has kind of chilled out, and we've picked up on that."

You can't tell by the wins and losses — the second-ranked Huskers' winning streak has grown past 20 — but it's clear Nebraska started played

Nebraska has lost just once in two seasons under John Cook.

its best volleyball of the season since the kinder, gentler Cook surfaced in early October.

The turning point followed Missouri's trip to Lincoln. The Tigers are a top-25 contender this season, but haven't taken even a game from Nebraska at the Coliseum since Kropp or any of her teammates were born.

The streak remained intact, but not without Nebraska having to scramble. The Huskers needed 10 straight points to take game two, after trailing 24-20. Then, in game three, NU dodged game point twice before winning 35-33.

Visibly distraught during the match, Cook cut loose on his team afterward in the locker room. In front of reporters, he all but said he hoped his team would have lost a game to teach them a lesson. He was out front in challenging the leadership of the team to turn things around.

"I don't know if we get bored, or we just think we're so physically talented that we don't have to work hard," Cook said. "But when you start letting balls drop on your side, there's no excuse for that."

He even took a shot at the Tigers, cracking on his post-match radio show that Missouri would have called off school the next day had it won a game.

It was just another of the things Cook regretted over the next few weeks. And when NU traveled to face a fired-up group of Tigers for the late-October rematch, Cook asked his own players to bail him out.

Nebraska won, but with a game-one loss that otherwise might have set off the Huskers' coach. But this time, Cook was reserved and grateful just for the win.

Kropp, a senior captain, said the Huskers can tell a difference in their coach. Cook still demands a lot in practice, but he is noticeably looser when matches are played.

"A lot of times we can feel when Coach Cook is a little tense," Kropp said. "I think maybe sometimes that's when we feel we have to play perfect."

Cook is a self-described perfectionist, someone who expects the same from others. He's renowned for trying out different hotel rooms on the road until finding the one just

right for his taste.

As for meals away from home, they're a whole other matter.

Coaching at Nebraska, Cook is near perfect with the only loss coming early this season at top-ranked Long Beach State.

Tournament selections will be made Nov. 26, and most experts expect Nebraska and Long Beach State will ultimately play for the national championship. With only three weeks left in the regular season, the 49ers were still unbeaten, and 20-1 Nebraska was beginning to hit its stride.

The Huskers won dangerous road matches at Texas A&M, Texas and

Texas Tech in relative ease, extending NU's conference winning streak past 40. At home, the Huskers were dominant in sweeping the likes of Kansas State and Kansas.

In the latter match, Nebraska committed only six hitting errors. The resulting .523 attack percentage was the Huskers' best mark in over a year.

"Whatever interference we've had from the pressure, expectations or whatever, they just played for themselves," Cook said following the match, flashing a smile rarely seen over previous weeks. "That's what was so much fun to watch."

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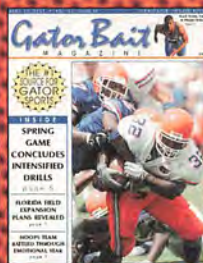
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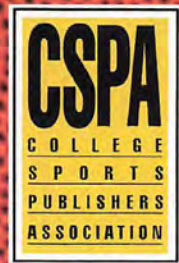
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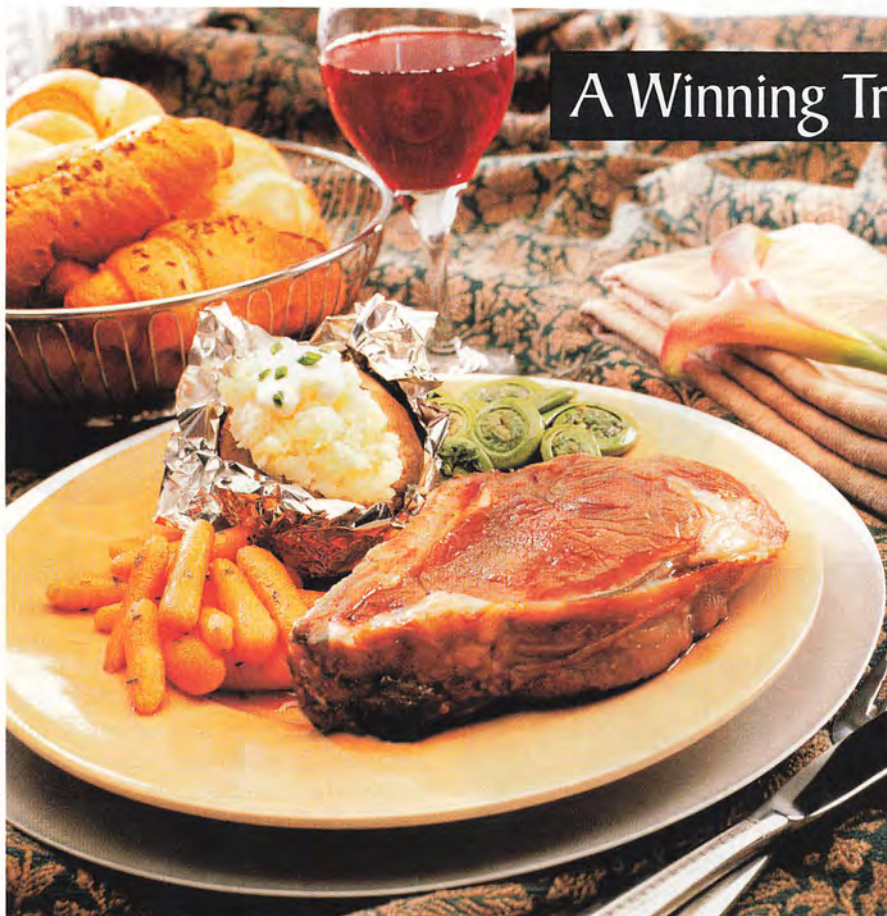
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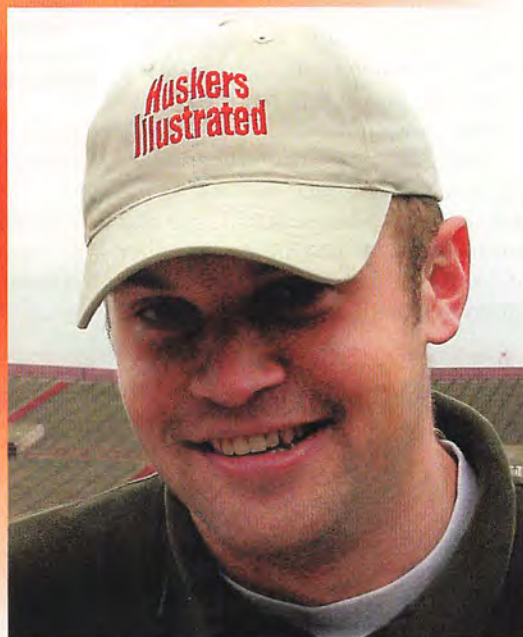
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Five Down, One to Go

**Huskers trying
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in in-state
recruiting
battles**

By Doug Horwich

Nebraska's basic recruiting strategy has remained consistent for many years now, and it's not likely to change any time soon.

First and foremost on the list of recruiting priorities at Nebraska is the goal of signing every in-state prospect who receives a Husker offer. In most years, this is a goal that Nebraska achieves, but occasionally an in-state player will opt for an out-of-state program.

This goal is particularly vital to Nebraska's continued success, as the state has a small population base and produces a relatively limited number of Division I scholarship athletes each year. Because Nebraska has tra-



Omaha Central's Mark LeFlore is rated as the No. 13 receiver in the nation by Rivals100 Recruiting.

ditionally relied on in-state talent to form the core of its recruiting classes, the Huskers have to sign the overwhelming majority of the top in-state prospects each year in order to remain successful.

To supplement this core group of

in-state players, Husker coaches cherry-pick from established national recruiting territories to fill the remaining scholarships. This basic recruiting formula is used by most programs around the country, but Nebraska's emphasis on in-state recruiting success is probably unmatched by any other school.

However, despite having a small in-state talent pool, Nebraska is also the only Division I program in the state and benefits from the absence of a rival in-state program. Teams like Iowa State and Kansas are not so fortunate, as they have to battle in-state rivals Iowa and Kansas State for in-state prospects.

The 2002 year was expected to be one in which as many as 9-10 Nebraska high school seniors might receive Husker offers. However, that number has turned out to be a high estimate, and with only 14 scholarship seniors graduating this year, Nebraska coaches have been very selective in offering in-state players.

Only six in-state seniors have received scholarship offers to play football at Nebraska this year, not including Lincoln Southeast's Alex Gordon, who accepted a Husker baseball scholarship. Of the six, five have already committed to Nebraska, with the exception being Omaha Central running back David Horne (6-foot, 200, 4.5).

Horne has remained wide-open for months now, with a top five of Colorado, Michigan, Nebraska, Notre Dame and Iowa that has remained fairly consistent. Despite the fact that he has attended numerous Husker games, Horne has not yet made an

Nebraska Commitments for 2002

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Curt Dukes	Newton (Newton-Conover), N.C.	6-2	210	QB
Matt Herian	Pierce, Neb.	6-5	225	TE
Mark LeFlore	Omaha (Central), Neb.	6-0	185	WR
Kurt Mann	Grand Island, Neb.	6-4 1/2	255	OL
Jay Moore	Elkhorn, Neb.	6-4 1/2	245	RE
Dane Todd	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	5-11 1/2	230	FB
DeMorrio Williams	Beckville, Texas (Kilgore College)	6-1	200	LB

official visit to Lincoln.

"I won't break down the schools until after my visits," Horne said. "Nebraska is even with the other four. The only reason that I haven't scheduled a visit yet to Nebraska is because I have already been there many times. I've already seen it all."

"Other than spending the night in Lincoln with some of my friends on the team, there probably isn't a whole lot that I haven't already done down there."

Horne said his first visit will be to Colorado.

"My first visit is to Colorado (Nov. 23) to see them play Nebraska the day after Thanksgiving," he said. "I then go to Michigan on Dec. 1, to Notre Dame on Dec. 8 and to Iowa on Dec. 15. My fifth visit will probably be taken to Nebraska, although I haven't set that one up yet."

Horne is one of the top-rated running back prospects in the country, and is yet another great Central High School running back, in a long line of great backs that includes Gale Sayers, Ahman Green and Calvin Jones.

Needless to say, the Husker coaches will be very disappointed if Horne decides to leave the state to play football, and recent recruiting battles for Central prospects Brandon Williams (Michigan) and Ja'Maine Billups (Iowa State) did not turn out in Nebraska's favor.

One factor possibly working in Nebraska's favor with Horne is that his friend and Central High teammate Mark LeFlore (6-0, 185, 4.45) has already orally accepted a Husker scholarship offer as a wide receiver.

LeFlore has been committed to Nebraska for more than a year now, but he had planned to accompany Horne on a few recruiting visits. However, after an official visit to Lincoln during the weekend of the Oklahoma game, LeFlore canceled all of his remaining visits and reaffirmed his long-standing Husker commitment.

"I've been committed to Nebraska for over one year now," LeFlore said. "I had scheduled visits to Iowa and Colorado and was considering taking trips to Tennessee and Wisconsin, but I've realized that there is no need to take other visits."

"After being down there with the players and talking to them about the

Top Running Back Picks Volunteers

By Rick Shaw

Nebbraska coaches recently received some bad news regarding one of their top recruiting targets for the class of 2002.

Standout running back prospect Gerald Riggs Jr. delivered an oral commitment to the Tennessee Volunteers on Oct. 28. The 6-foot, 220-pound superstar out of Red Bank High School in Chattanooga, Tenn., is widely considered to be among the top three high school running back prospects in the country.

Although Riggs is committed to Tennessee, the Huskers still hold a glimmer of hope in landing this high school All-American. He still looks to take an official visit to Lincoln sometime this winter.

"He would still like to visit Nebraska and Michigan, if they are interested," said Riggs' father, Gerald Sr.

— The son of a former Cornhusker is getting lots of attention from the Nebraska coaches.

Matt Spaeth, a 6-7, 245-pound tight end/defensive end prospect out of St. Michael High School in Albertville, Minn., is getting weekly calls from the Husker coaches and may see a scholarship offer soon.

Spaeth, whose father Ken lettered at Nebraska in 1975-77, has already been offered scholarships by Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Alabama and is hearing from Notre Dame and Iowa, in addition to the Nebraska.

"Nebraska is a good program, and they are always a good team," Spaeth said. "That is what I like. Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Minnesota are probably my top three teams."

Spaeth is averaging 15 tackles per game from his middle linebacker post as a senior and has recorded a team leading 6 interceptions.

— Nebraska is looking to help restock its offensive line with another talented blue-chipper out of Hawaii. Samson Satele, out of Kailua High School in Kailua, Hawaii, has been offered a scholarship by Nebraska and has the Huskers on his early list of favorites.

"Hawaii, Nebraska, Washington, BYU, and Colorado have all offered me," Satele said. "I like the coaches at Nebraska and the training and weight lifting that they do there."

The 6-4, 295-pound Satele said that he will likely take visits to all five of his favorites, although he admits that the home state team will be tough to turn down.

"Distance is probably a factor," Satele said. "It will probably come into play with my decision."

— Distance shouldn't be a factor in Donny Mateaki's college decision. The blue-chip defensive end prospect from Iolani High School in Honolulu, Hawaii, has set up an official visit to Nebraska for Dec. 7.

The 6-6, 260-pound Mateaki has also planned recruiting visits to Colorado and Oregon.

"I'll also definitely visit Arizona," Mateaki said, "and either Washington or Wisconsin. I just want to see how I get along with all of the coaches and if the coaches are going to be there the full four or five years that I will be there. That will be the deciding factor for me."

Mateaki has already recorded 13 sacks for the 2001 season and has been offered scholarships by all of his favorites except Nebraska.

"Everybody in our school and community talks highly of Nebraska and Colorado," Mateaki said. ■

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recruiting process, I don't think that taking additional visits would be worth it anyway. I'm not going to take any more trips."

LeFlore's commitment has always been considered solid, but the Husker staff will certainly feel better about his intentions now that he has canceled his remaining visits.

LeFlore's trip to Lincoln probably could not have gone much better.

"On a scale of 1 to 10, I would score the visit a '10,' " he said. "I stayed with Lornell McPherson and DeAntae Grixby and got a chance to hang out with the players and talk to the coaches.

"I brought a football down there and was having all of the past Nebraska greats that were at the game sign it. I had Neil Smith, Ahman Green, Scott Frost and others sign the ball. I even met Barry Switzer and had him sign it. He laughed and said it was the first time he could ever remember having somebody ask him to sign a Nebraska football."

LeFlore also had a chance to talk to former summer camp attendee Mike Stuntz.

"He was pretty excited about the game," LeFlore said. "I wasn't surprised that he made the big play. He has always passed well. I went to summer camp with him during the summer going into my junior year. He was right on the money with all of his passes — outs, hitches, deep balls—he could throw them all.


LeFlore said his weekend in Lincoln was fun.

"I expected to have a good time, and that's what I had. It will be fun to be a part of all of that next year."


"All of that" could involve on-field activities as well as off-the-field activities for LeFlore. A number of true freshmen tend to play every year at Nebraska, and LeFlore is likely to be one of those players next season. With blazing speed and outstanding hands, he has established himself as one of the top wide receiver prospects in the nation.

However, LeFlore also has a reputation for being a fierce blocker—a trait that will help to get him onto the field early at Nebraska.

In the Huskers' platoon wide receiver system, LeFlore could see substantial time in a rotation with Wilson Thomas next season. ■



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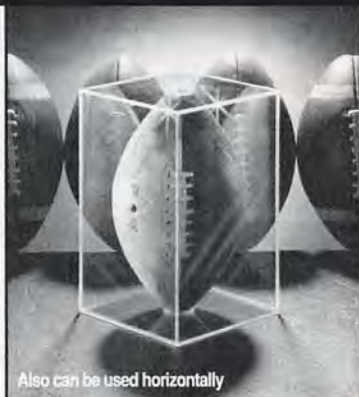
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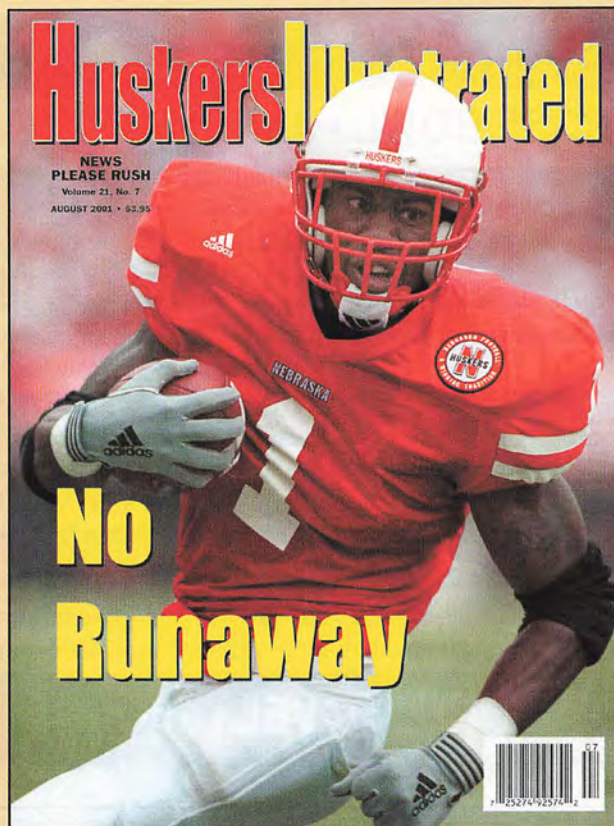
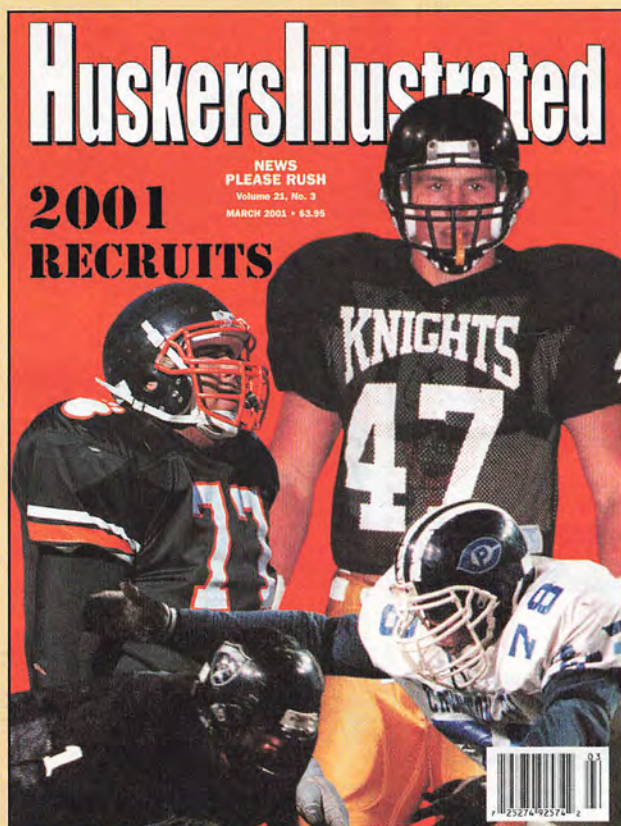
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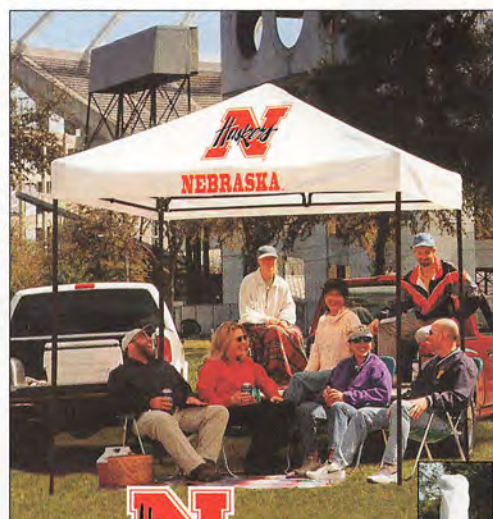
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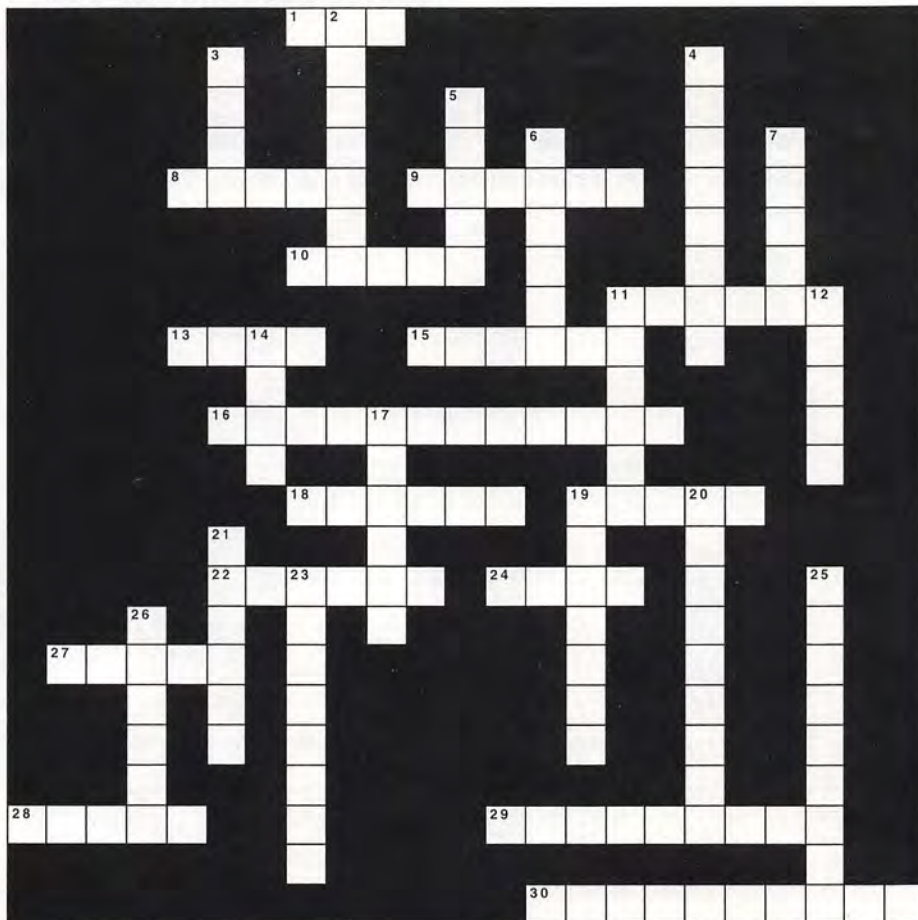
ACROSS

- 1 Network for Nebraska-Colorado game
- 8 NU rover from Colorado
- 9 NU's No. 9 (defense)
- 10 Kicked winning field goal vs. Colorado in 2000
- 11 NU's rating entering K-State game
- 13 Colorado color
- 15 NU leader in total tackles
- 16 Day before Nebraska-Colorado game
- 18 NU offensive coordinator
- 19 NU athletic director
- 22 NU's No. 9 (offense)
- 24 NU backup quarterback
- 27 Ex-Husker defensive back now with Bears
- 28 Ahead of Nebraska in ratings
- 29 Colorado nickname
- 30 Thunder Collins' home state

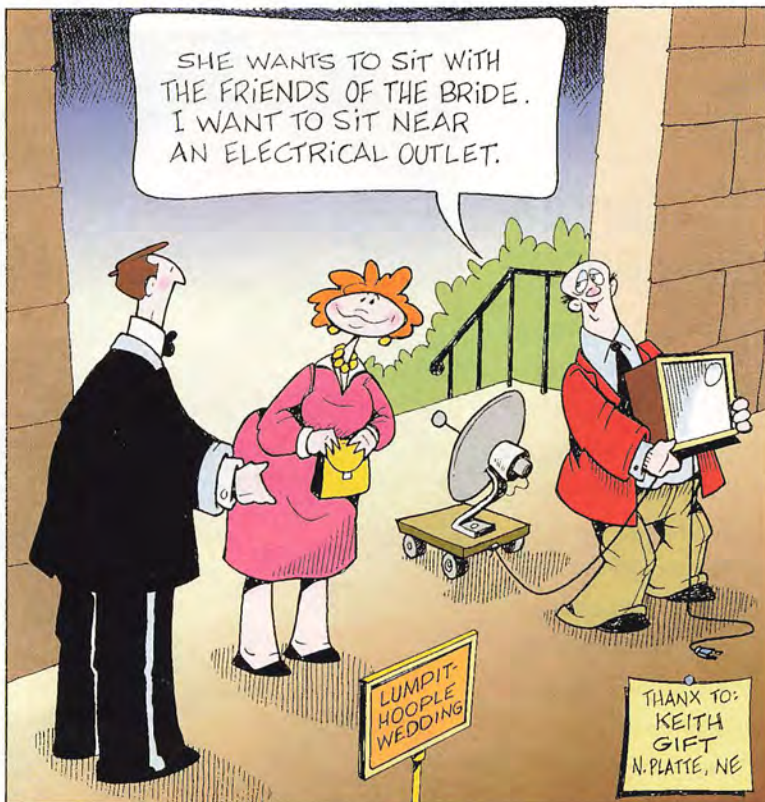
DOWN

- 2 Colorado campus location
- 3 NU defensive coordinator
- 4 NU's leading rusher
- 5 Ex-Husker I-back now with Packers
- 6 NU leader in solo tackles
- 7 Husker radio announcer
- 11 NU's No. 16 (defense)
- 12 NU kick returner from Colorado
- 14 NU nose tackle out for the season
- 17 Leading tackler vs. Kansas
- 19 Colorado head coach
- 20 Former Colorado coach
- 21 NU's No. 16 (offense)
- 23 Josh Brown's home state
- 25 Returned punt for TD vs. Kansas
- 26 Colorado's home field

Answers in Dec. 1 issue



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Heisman candidate Crouch appreciates support of fans, Cornhusker teammates



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ERIC CROUCH WALKED OFF the FieldTurf at Memorial Stadium for the final time following a game, to the cheers of many who have watched him perform for four seasons. The moment was bittersweet, heightened by the melancholy sounds of the Dan Fogelberg song of the early 1980s "Run for the Roses."

Cornhusker fans are thinking of the Rose Bowl and a national championship now, justifiably so.

He walked off by himself, or at least "I'm pretty sure I did," he said.

Sometimes the particulars of such a point in time are lost in the emotion.

Before stepping beneath the South Stadium stands, he waved to those cheering above.

"I didn't expect anything less than what happened today as far as support the state has shown and given to these players and myself the last four years," he said.

If the Heisman Trophy were to be awarded by simple acclamation of those in the South Stadium stands, Crouch would have carried it with him into the locker room.

They don't have Heisman votes, of course. But they do remind him that he is a serious candidate for the award as college football's best player — with, among other things, their campaign signs.

"I can tell you this much, it's just been great to have that support," he said.

But, he has been quick to add whenever the Heisman Trophy is at issue, he isn't concerned about the award. And if he were to win it, well, he would have to share it with his teammates.

"That's just the kind of player I am, the person I am," he said.

Even so, the Heisman Trophy could be his for the taking. With each victory, his candidacy is strengthened. His statistics against Kansas State might not seem Heisman-like: 106 yards and one touchdown rushing, 3-of-7 passing for 60 yards, with two interceptions.

But "you can't run an offense against these people on the ground without having a quarterback like Eric Crouch because he gives you so many things you can go to, and (he) just gives you an added dimension that most people don't have in their offense," Coach Frank Solich said.

"He certainly was a key, and we built around him, the entire game, which was obvious."

Solich's endorsement of Crouch was unsolicited, and it included taking responsibility for the second of Crouch's two pass interceptions. "Really, that was not Eric's interception," said Solich.

Because he called the pass, "that was probably my inter-

ception," he said.

Crouch's Heisman candidacy got a boost over the weekend when Miami quarterback Ken Dorsey threw four interceptions in an 18-7 victory at Boston College and UCLA running back DeShaun Foster, the nation's third-leading rusher, didn't play because of a suspension for violating the NCAA's extra-benefits rule. It appears now that Foster might miss the remainder of the season.

Crouch doesn't try to pretend he isn't aware of such things.

"Obviously, since I'm in that campaign, I'm going to receive a lot of information about it, the situation," he said. "I'm aware. I do watch (ESPN's) 'Sports Center.' I do watch the nightly news once in a while. I do read the paper. So I am informed of the situation."

He just isn't absorbed in it. "I understand the goal of this program is to win football games. I really don't care about any personal honors. That's kind of how I've been," he said.

A year ago about this time, Crouch received a letter from the Downtown Athletic Club of New York City, notifying him that he was among the 10 finalists for the Heisman Trophy.

"That was exciting just to receive a letter that had the Heisman title on it," he said, adding that he still has the letter somewhere at home in Omaha, though he probably couldn't readily find it.

The odds are he will join an elite group of NCAA Division I-A quarterbacks who have rushed for 1,000 yards and passed for 1,000 yards in the same season. He already has more than 1,000 yards passing. And he has rushed for 953 yards, with, in all probability, two games that count left to play.

If Nebraska doesn't beat Colorado to advance to the Big 12 championship game, his chances of winning the Heisman Trophy will diminish, anyway, because his most significant statistic is victories.

"That we're winning football games speaks for itself in a lot of ways," he said. "There are a lot of great football players out there, but they're not winning; they're not successful."

And that's what could determine who takes home the Heisman Trophy this season.

The ballots were mailed on Nov. 7 and must be returned by Dec. 7 at 5 p.m.

The Downtown Athletic Club will invite the top finalists to New York City for the presentation ceremony, and Crouch almost certainly will be among those at the Marriott Marquis on Times Square. And if he leads the Cornhuskers to two more victories, he could very well bring the trophy home.

Then he would turn his attention to bringing home Nebraska's sixth national championship trophy.

He has made it perfectly clear which of the two is more important to him. ■



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